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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7649th meeting
Thursday, 17 March 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Klein
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Thirty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2016/169)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Thirty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2016/169)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia; Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and Mr. Olof Skoog, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Sweden.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/169, which contains the thirty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif: At this time last year, the National Security Council of Liberia endorsed the Government of Liberia's plan for the transition of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). This marked the beginning of an historic undertaking, led by the Government of Liberia, to assume full responsibility for security by 30 June 2016, in line with the deadline set by the Security Council.

With less than four months remaining, the Government of Liberia has intensified its efforts to implement the plan. Last month, the Government, with UNMIL and other international stakeholders, conducted a stock-taking exercise to assess progress and reprioritize activities within the plan so as to ensure that its most important targets are met by 30 June. Both the Government and UNMIL are confident that, with sustained political commitment, the priority targets of the plan will be achieved. However, more concerted efforts by the executive and legislative branches are required to ensure the urgent enactment and implementation of critical legislation relating to the security sector. In January, after long delays, the Senate approved the draft firearms and ammunition control act, which now remains before the House of Representatives. Other important outstanding legislation, such as the police and immigration service acts, are still pending with the Senate and have yet to be submitted to the House.

The implementation of the plan has been uneven, with a number of activities falling behind schedule. In addition to delays in the passage of legislation, challenges in releasing the necessary Government funding for security transition have been a considerable constraint. Competing priorities for Government spending and the deteriorating economic outlook recently compelled the Government to announce austerity measures and to revise national budget projections downward. While we understand that these revised projections are unlikely to affect the commitments undertaken by the Government with regard to the security transition, there are still major funding gaps for security transition tasks, such as arms inspection or training, and equipment for the Liberia National Fire Service, which will require external support. I appeal to bilateral and multilateral partners to provide support to the security transition, particularly to those activities that enhance public trust and confidence in security sector personnel. Failure to do so may result in a fragile security transition, which could undermine the many gains made in peace consolidation in the country.

Meanwhile, UNMIL has continued to hand over security responsibilities to national security agencies, such as the Liberian National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, including the provision of security at Monrovia Central Prison and the National Palace of Justice in Zwedru, and at one of the country's two airports. The Mission remains engaged with the Liberian security agencies to advance the development of institutional structures and legal frameworks for the justice and security sectors, as well as the establishment of accountability mechanisms. This includes the training and mentoring of their senior management, assisting in the drafting of required legislation, policies and standard operating procedures, supporting the further decentralization of security services at the

regional and county levels, and the establishment of county and district security councils.

In parallel, UNMIL has continued to implement its drawdown plan and the authorized reductions in its military and police personnel, in accordance with resolution 2239 (2015). After the completion of the security transition, UNMIL's residual force and formed police units will be concentrated in and around Monrovia, as well as in Gbarnga and Zwedru. UNMIL will maintain critical enablers to ensure its mobility and quick deployment in support of Liberian security agencies and to protect civilians in the event of a deterioration of the security situation that could threaten a strategic reversal. With the reduction of the military component, the 50 military observers will redeploy in the five UNMIL offices in Gbarnga, Greenville, Harper, Voinjama and Zwedru, and will work closely with the United Nations civilian police and the field support component to perform their duties.

UNMIL has also continued to consolidate its deployments and streamline its activities in line with the mandated tasks. By 30 June, UNMIL will have consolidated its 13 county offices into five regional offices. As part of the consolidation process, we have also proposed a reduction of over 30 per cent in UNMIL's civilian staffing for the 2016-2017 budget cycle. The closure of the field offices has been accompanied by a proactive public information campaign, including the holding of town hall meetings between senior Government officials and local communities. I have personally attended most of these meetings to explain the objectives of the security transition, to emphasize the importance of the Liberian security actors exercising full responsibility, to remind the communities of their role in maintaining peace and security, and to assure them of the United Nations continued support.

While we will continue to convey these messages, there is an increasing sense of unease and apprehension among Liberians across the board about the UNMIL drawdown and the prospect of its eventual departure. As Council members are aware, President Johnson-Sirleaf, in a joint letter with President Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire, urged the Secretary-General to request the Security Council to maintain the quick-reaction force and United Nations forces in both countries until after the elections in Liberia. The events of 13 March in Côte d'Ivoire strengthened the perception among the Liberians of an inadequate local capacity to deal with security threats in Liberia. Three opposition political parties and several civil society organizations, under the umbrella of a joint action committee, called for the postponement of the UNMIL departure until after the elections. This petition was formalized in a memorandum addressed to the Council, which was handed over to me on 11 March.

Concerns remain about the slow pace of key political and institutional reforms that are essential to promoting and sustaining reconciliation. The enhanced political commitment of all Liberian institutions and civil society to constitutional reform, decentralization, land reform and good governance is vital in order to address the root causes of past and potentially future conflicts, and to establish a new compact between the Government and the population it is intended to serve. Lack of action on the various key pieces of legislation is a major cause of the slow progress in the security transition. In addition to the bills already mentioned, other essential pieces of legislation awaiting to be enacted include the land rights act, the land authority act, the local governance act, the gender equity bill, the whistle-blowers protection act, the corrupt offences act and the domestic violence act. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to members of the Council to call for the expeditious adoption of all these bills. This is the responsibility not of the executive branch alone, but of the Liberian Government as a whole, particularly the legislature.

As UNMIL draws down, it becomes critical to invest in capacity-building and strengthening the rule of law and justice sectors. In that regard, it is important that the Liberian judiciary system, with the support of UNMIL and the international community, intensify efforts to improve the provision of services, ensuring that the population and communities are empowered to settle disputes, and to ensure the protection of their interests. Some additional priorities include the need to reduce the high level of pre-trial detentions, promote justice in relation to children and sexual and gender-based violence, improve conditions in prisons and, last but not least, implement the national human rights plan.

Liberia's long-term security and stability also require continued focus on improving regional cooperation, including cross-border cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire. Both countries enhanced security measures along the border following the fatal clashes related to illicit cross-border farming. These have included the temporary deployment of the armed forces of Liberia to reinforce national security agencies operating in the area. The Liberian Minister of Defence

has indicated the possibility of deploying a joint military operation, together with Ivorian counterparts, to deter cross-border attacks. The issue will be discussed at the quadripartite meeting of the heads of the armed forces of the two countries and the Force Commanders of the two Missions later this month. Such discussions will be held within the framework of the next session of the joint commission for bilateral cooperation between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, as proposed by the Liberian Government.

The second joint council of chiefs and elders of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, held in January, was also a positive development in efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts at the local level through peaceful means. The Mano River Union plan to hold technical and ministerial meetings in Abidjan in April, with the support of UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, to discuss enhanced collaboration in the areas of maritime security, border security and counter-terrorism is another welcome development. In the meantime, progress has been achieved in the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia. Following the resumption of the process in December, 10,654 of some 37,000 remaining refugees have returned to Côte d'Ivoire so far. We are hoping that tomorrow there will be another 200 refugees returning to their country.

The expected completion of the security transition on 30 June will be one of the most significant milestones for Liberia and the international community since the end of the country's civil war and the signing of the peace agreement in 2003. It will also mark the beginning of a new phase in United Nations engagement in Liberia. However, Liberia and the international community must not lose sight of the still arduous path to a genuinely sustainable peace in Liberia and the region, which will require the long-term engagement and support of the international community.

Before concluding, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, and all members of the Security Council for the strong support being provided to UNMIL and its operations.

The President: I thank Mr. Zarif for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms.Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka: I visited Liberia three weeks ago, and I am thankful to Angola for the invitation to speak to the Council on the subject today, soon after my visit.

I found that the country has a strong, vibrant democracy and the healthy engagement of different stakeholders. The women continue to be resilient in the face of persisting challenges. We have to applaud the strength of the Liberian democracy since the end of the conflict. It is, however, vital now that we continue to invest in the Liberian people's broader resilience and recovery. The dividends of peace need to flow greater and deeper for women and girls.

Liberian women have earned global fame for helping to bring an end to the civil war, convincing the rebels to lay down arms, consolidating peace and ensuring that the country does not relapse into conflict since the civil war ended 13 years ago. Liberian women today are also known for the extraordinary role they played in halting, reversing and eliminating the Ebola epidemic. I bring the inspiring example of Liberian women when I speak to women from Syria, Colombia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic or the Democratic Republic of the Congo in my travels to conflict-affected countries. Truly, Liberian women are a source of inspiration.

However, Liberian women have yet to benefit fully from the dividends of peace. The absence of war does not mean the presence of complete peace. We have to ask ourselves: What does peace mean to women when they continue to experience high daily levels of sexual and gender-based violence, with very limited access to justice? Only 8 per cent of girls have completed secondary education or higher, and there are reports of alarming rates of sexual abuse and exploitation in schools by teachers and administrators, with total impunity. Whenever I speak with teenagers, they ask me for more female teachers; this call has also been echoed to me by the President. Harmful traditional practices, from child marriage to female genital mutilation and the abduction of girls into the Sande and Poro secret tribal societies, are devastating both to women's lives and the country's recovery. Thankfully, the bill on domestic violence currently before Parliament includes the banning of both female genital mutilation and the end of child marriage. We are anxious that the bill be passed.

The country that elected Africa's first woman President is ranked 149th in female representation in Parliament, and there are even lower rates of women's leadership in local districts, towns, clans and chiefdoms. Again, we appreciate the fact that there is an effort — which needs the Council's support — to

secure a quota ahead of the coming local Government elections so as to increase women's representation and participation. Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be one of the most reported crimes, particularly against minors, yet the overwhelming majority of perpetrators escape justice, despite the hard work of some Government officials and civil society organizations.

The drawdown of our troops must be accompanied by significant investment in and support for a criminal justice system that works and serves the people. In addition, as many of us know, women were disproportionately affected by the Ebola epidemic. They were at the greatest risk of infection because of their roles as caregivers and nurses. Women are proud of their role and share a strong desire to strengthen their health system. In a country where women are a majority of cross-border traders and approximately 85 per cent of daily market traders, many women were suddenly impoverished by border closures, travel restrictions and market shutdowns. These women have called upon us to help them rebuild their trade, which does not require a lot. As the Government Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protections noted, these women were heroes before the Ebola crisis hit. They are now back to zero.

Gains against maternal and infant mortality were quickly reversed by the disruption of basic services. My mission to Liberia was also to look into our support to the effort to provide water, sanitation and hygiene services as an initiative that we are undertaking together with Oxfam International and the Government. The Governments of both Liberia and Sierra Leone are our partners.

The Council is mainly deliberating today on the continuation of the Mission drawdown plans and the future of the United Nations presence in Liberia. There cannot be a vacuum when the Mission leaves. We have to show Liberians that the end of the peacekeeping Mission does not mean that the international community will turn its back on them. There is no better way of showing that than by resolving to invest in those who need us most, who have been most affected by the war and the epidemic and who are also important to a secure post-conflict Liberia. Insecurity and impunity impact girls and women hardest. It is important that we understand and act on that so that no one is left behind.

What I am asking of the international community is to increase its deployment of support to reconstruction, peacebuilding initiatives and the rule of law in order to bring women and girls the justice and peace dividend they have earned. During my visit we launched a five-year joint programme aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence that encompasses every important Government actor and a major number of United Nations entities in a great example of coordinated and extensive consultation with the community. The plan, which I have to say is one of the best I have ever seen anywhere, needs our support to succeed, especially in its law-enforcement aspect.

The Government of Liberia, with support from UN-Women and the United Nations country team, has been at the forefront of implementing the Secretary-General's seven-point plan on gender-responsive peacekeeping. Future investments in Liberia's reconstruction must continue to adhere to the commitment to allocating a minimum of 15 per cent of all peacebuilding funds to gender equality. Similarly, we have to ensure that women are included, engaged and participate in the benefits of all the investments in water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure that are planned as part of the recovery from Ebola. We stand ready to support the training that will equip them to be competent partners in ensuring that those services are provided. We should learn from the good practices in the fight against Ebola that were led by women or targeted them so that we can apply them to other epidemics that particularly affect women and girls, such as the Zika virus.

We have supported efforts and provided economic grants for hard-hit cross-border traders, supported orphaned children and stigmatized survivors and ensured that women's needs were reflected in the United Nations humanitarian response. The country's network of women's peace huts, the local peacebuilding mechanism that has been copied in several countries in the region, must continue to receive our support for the needs it still has and in order to ensure that it becomes fully embedded in the local governance system. The country needs thousands of female teachers and midwives for an ambitious economic empowerment programme in support of rural women and to help them relaunch trading activity. Liberia's women need strong justice organizations and security actors to ensure respect for the country's laws.

Even as the Mission continues its drawdown, I must ask it to consider its contribution to gender equality as a key element of its legacy. I am happy to report that

the Liberia country team and the Mission have been planning for an orderly handover of gender-related functions and have consulted and fully integrated their efforts with the UN-Women team and other stakeholders in the country. The Mission has been playing an important role in advancing women's participation in peacebuilding and peace consolidation, while supporting various Government institutions in implementing their commitments to gender equality, advocating for important legal reforms and even building the capacity of women's organizations through quick-impact projects.

UN-Women and the rest of the United Nations family are preparing for the challenging task of inheriting those functions and continuing to move forward. We need the support of the Mission, the Security Council and the international community at large in the crucial next few months, especially in four specific areas. First, as has been mentioned, is the enactment of pending bills on domestic violence, land rights, reproductive health and governance decentralization, which are important to women and gender equality. The second is women's involvement in the decentralization of health, education and agricultural and water and sanitation services. The third is a robust, dependable criminal justice system that can, and must, protect its communities and women. The last is the importance of taking ambitious steps to improve the decreasing representation of women in politics at the national and local levels, including through enforceable quotas and temporary special measures.

That is a short and modest list for a country whose women fought very hard to defeat the rebels and Ebola. We must make sure that gender inequality is also defeated and that their political voices are heard. In very large measure, the future of Liberia depends upon its women and their resilience. That is something that the international community cannot turn away from and must, in fact, take up as strongly as it can, or we will leave with our mission having been fully accomplished.

The President: I thank Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skoog.

Mr. Skoog: I thank you for the invitation to brief the Security Council this morning on behalf the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Mr. President. I will focus my remarks on the ongoing security transition and the Commission's priorities for its engagement with Liberia in the next few years.

There are many lessons to be learned from previous transitions. We now have a great opportunity to plan for a smooth transition that will put Liberia on a robust path towards further consolidation of peace. There can be no excuses for a fragmented approach on the part of the United Nations system or the international community. We also have a collective responsibility to avoid the financial cliff that has sometimes characterized the drawdown of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the past. Sustained international attention is imperative, both financially and politically. The PBC looks forward to playing its part.

I would now like to turn to the PBC's statement of mutual commitment with the Government of Liberia. In the light of the several transitions under way, our configuration has undertaken to review our engagement to ensure that it is aligned with the Government's current efforts and is adding real value to them. A technical level mission, which included representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Political Affairs and the Chair of the Liberia configuration, visited Monrovia at the end of January. They met with a wide range of Government interlocutors, civil society, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations country team and the donor community for constructive discussions on peacebuilding needs in Liberia and the role of the Peacebuilding Commission going forward. Our mission reported a clear and widely shared vision of what peacebuilding efforts are needed and clear views on how and where the Commission can play an important role.

At the same time, the mission noted some concerns. The difficult budgetary situation puts a strain on the Government's ability to roll out the key peacebuilding programmes it has identified as priorities. In addition, interlocutors on the ground reported that there was public apprehension about the drawdown of the UNMIL presence. Clear communication to the public and the proper management of perceptions will be important in that regard, as well as assuring them of the enduring commitment of the international community, including the United Nations, to the people of Liberia.

Building on wide consultations, the Peacebuilding Commission affirmed that our engagement's priority

areas remained valid. I will touch on them briefly, starting with security sector reform.

First, in the light of the upcoming drawdown of UNMIL in accordance with resolution 2239 (2015), the PBC will work to support the Liberian Government's efforts to strengthen the operational efficiency of the security agencies in the country by helping the Government to address structural challenges and the provision of justice and security to all Liberians. It will be vital to ensure that priority activities within the Government of Liberia's plan for UNMIL's transition are completed on time.

Secondly, on the rule of law, in order to build the effectiveness and the integrity of legal institutions, increase equitable access to justice and strenghten the rule of law, the PBC will support the Government's efforts to address systematic weaknesses in the criminal justice system and weak administrative procedures, and ensure adequate budgetary allocations to capacitate institutions central to security and the rule of law. The Commission will also help advance the constitutional reform process in a timely manner, ensuring robust civic education and civil society engagement.

Thirdly, on reconciliation, as articulated by the Government, reconciliation in Liberia is a multidimensional process of overcoming social, political and religious cleavages, healing the physical and psychological wounds from the civil war, and confronting and addressing historical and structural wrongs, in particular the root causes of conflict. The PBC will strengthen its efforts to expedite the reconciliation process, in close consultation with local actors in Liberia.

Fourthly, on elections, the PBC will focus its work on the upcoming 2017 elections, which represents a significan opportunity for further democratic consolidation. We will support the efforts of the Government and the National Elections Commission to ensure that the elections are successfully conducted and further contribute to improving governance, reconciliation and stability. This will depend on efforts to enable the widest possible public awareness and participation, as well as deployment of preventive measures ranging from formal mechanisms for electoral dispute resolution to regular channels for dialogue between the security forces and the population.

Last but not least, the PBC has a responsibility to highlight socioeconomic needs that are fundamental to building sustainable peace. As Liberia is still recovering from the economic effects of the Ebola virus disease and the severe impacts of the drop of commodity prices on raw materials, there is a need to reinvigorate the economy by strengthening the private sector, create jobs and build capacity for domestic revenue generation. We will work to strengthen our engagement with the international financial institutions in this regard. The decentralization process, which is a cross-cutting issue in our work, will be important not only to strenghtening State presence and authority outside of Monrovia, but also to extending the provision of basic social services. I look forward to highlighting such issues over the coming 12 months.

Through our statement of mutual commitments, we seek to align the work of the Commission behind existing commitments, rather than duplicate efforts by creating new ones. We will work to draw attention to and rally international support around commitments made in strategic frameworks, such as Liberia Rising, the Liberia Agenda for Transformation, the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation and, equally important, around the constitutional review process, the draft legislation related to land rights and administration, local governance, decentralization and civil service reform. These important pieces of legislation cut to the core of peace and State-building and have the potential to transform State and society relations in Liberia, provided that they move forward.

The Commission commits to undertaking political advocacy and accompaniment, advocating for generating necessary resources and fostering coordinated actions among all relevant stakeholders. The Commission will continue to promote and integrate a strategic and coherent approach to peacebuilding and serve as a forum for dialogue for all relevant actors. In particular, the configuration will draw and sustain international attention to and support for the preparations for the 2017 elections and continue to highlight peacebuilding issues during the ongoing security transition.

Before concluding, let me make a few recommendations to this body. In light of the upcoming drawdown of UNMIL, we encourage the United Nations system, to the widest extent possible, to engage in joint strategic planning for a well-managed transition and for meeting long-term peacebuilding needs during and beyond the transition. In addition, we emphasize the need to take into account regional dimensions of

peacebuilding and the importance of working together with the Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union and of building on successful regional initiatives.

I would like to make the case for including women and youth in all peacebuilding efforts as we move forward. operationalizing resolution 2250 (2015). Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka has just made a very impressive intervention, which is very compelling and convincing as to including women as we move forward. I also think that we need engage the large youth population, as it constitutes one of the greatest assets for Liberia's work to consolidate peace and to move forward with confidence.

In conclusion, the Peacebuilding Commission remains determined to advance Liberia's peacebuilding agenda, as outlined by the Government, and is reinvigorated by the renewed commitment showed by all actors through the process of revising our strategy of engagement. We look forward to supporting the efforts of the Security Council in ensuring a well-managed drawdown.

The President: I thank Ambassador Skoog for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Liberia.

Mr. Patten (Liberia): It is a privilege for me to participate in a meeting of the Council on the work of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). I wish to convey the deep gratitude of the Government and the people of Liberia to the Council for its continued support of peace and stability in Liberia. In the same vein, I wish to commend Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and the entire UNMIL family for the many contributions they are making in the consummation of peace and stability in Liberia. I wish to further thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his statement, which has given further insights into the work of UNMIL.

Similarly, I wish to thank the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Olof Skoog, for his statement. The work of the PBC has been critical to sustaining peace in Liberia. The statement draws on the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders on the new statement of mutual commitments. We endorse the recommendations in the statement.

I also wish to thank the Executive Director of UN-Women for her statement. We appreciate the ongoing attention and support that the women of Liberia continue to receive from UN-Women.

Thirteen years after the civil conflict, significant progress has been made in Liberia in the areas of peace and security, with the support of UNMIL. With stability established, focus has now shifted to economic and social development and governance reforms. The thirty-first progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/169) provides a fairly accurate report of the situation in Liberia and a level of preparedness of Liberian security institutions to assume from UNMIL the full security responsibilities of the country come 30 June. As of 15 March, the Government of Liberia has assumed full responsibility for six of the eight UNMIL responsibilities. We therefore thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the support of UNMIL in furtherance of the implementation of the Government's transition plan.

I wish to affirm that UNMIL has been a significant and dependable partner, creating a platform for continued dialogue and assistance as we implement the transition. Steady progress has been made in the areas of training and capacity-building of the Liberian National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and other security institutions, and the deployment of officers to various countries has begun. As of January, additional Liberian National Police officers, including emergency response and police support units, have been deployed in eight border counties to address threats to peace, including cross-border threats. Additional logistical support, including vehicles, communication equipment and uniforms, has been supplied.

Not only is it important to enhance the numerical capacity of both the police and immigration services, but renewed focus has also been placed on the quality of training they receive. The ability of the national police to plan and carry out training is essential to bolstering the capacity of the police. The protection of human rights and civilians, which remains paramount to the work of the security institutions, has gained added traction by planners and training being made available to the relevant institutions in this area. Other aspects of the training being provided by the institutions are focused on leadership and management, border-control management, human trafficking, immigration law, and so on. The Liberian Government is optimistic that all activities under UNMIL that have not been taken over

by the relevant security institutions will be taken over by 30 June.

We acknowledge that corruption remains a challenge and a threat to governance. However, the Government of Liberia is not relenting in the fight to defeat it, through the support of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and the Ministry of Justice. Since our previous statement in the Council (see S/PV.7519), a number of Government officials — including the Managing Director of the National Port Authority, the former Minister of Commerce and the former Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company — have been indicted on corruption charges. Last week, the President dissolved the board of directors of the Liberian chapter of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in relation to the expenditure of funds donated for the Ebola disease. In a case of economic sabotage related to private use permits, convictions have been obtained against the former Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority, Moses Wogbeh, and other senior managers, who were convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and ordered to pay approximately $6 million in restitution. The former Comptroller of the National Drug Service was found guilty of economic sabotage and theft of property, sentenced to five years' imprisonment and ordered to pay $179,000 and LRD 958,000 in restitution. There is also a case involving the former board of directors of the National Oil Company of Liberia and some senior officers. Currently ongoing at the Temple of Justice is the corruption case involving the suspended Managing Director of the National Port Authority, Matilda W. Parker and the former Comptroller Christina Palay.

Liberia's transformative agenda also remains on course. This vision is firmly embedded in the resolve of the Government to introduce extensive changes in the areas of governance, the rule of law, education, infrastructure and health care. Following the submission of its report to the President, the recommendations from the work of the constitutional review process are now before the national legislature. A number of bills have been submitted to, and are under consideration by, that body, including the local Government act, the land rights act, the police act and the immigration act, as well as many other bills that are earmarked for enactment into law, including bills related women. While there have been some delays in taking action on those bills by the legislature, the Government of Liberia is confident that they will soon be passed into law.

It has been a couple of months since Liberia was declared Ebola-free. Now safe as a result of the global efforts that were exerted to defeat the scourge, thousands more Liberians could have succumbed to the pandemic. Even though Ebola has been overcome, the direct consequences of the disease, exacerbated by the global economic decline and the decrease in prices of the country's main export commodities — rubber and iron ore — have devastated the economy, leading to a reduction of over $70 million in projected revenues for the 2015-2016 fiscal year, and budget cuts across all levels of Government. That has made it difficult for the Government to fully implement its transformation agenda as planned.

When the Security Council requested that Liberia assume full security responsibility by June 2016, Liberia did not expect that the financial burden for that transition would be borne by it alone. Since the adoption of the plan by the Council, only Sweden and the European Union have contributed directly to it, in spite of the appeal by the Council for support. Liberia wishes to therefore call on the international community, donors and partners to lend their support to this worthy cause.

Let me now turn to the letter written by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and her Ivorian counterpart, President Alassane Ouattara, to the Security Council. Concerns have been raised by many Liberians about the security of the country as we approach the 2017 elections. Those concerns, which find support in many quarters, are based on the perception that the departure of UNMIL would create a security vacuum. That negative perception has been reinforced by the recent terrorist attack in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, the news of the relocation of the United Nations rapid response force stationed in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire from Abidjan to Mali, and the planned presidential elections in 2017.

While it is the view of the Government that State security institutions are being prepared to carry out their duties during such a critical time, it is important to address that negative perception. The Government of Liberia proposes that the Council consider maintaining a deterrent force in Liberia — not troops on the ground to engage in combat but a force sufficient to provide psychological support and a cushion up to the 2017

elections. The force could be a subregional force. The presence of a United Nations force on the ground coupled with community policing will help create an enabling environment for peace, the conduct of general elections and the seamless handover to an elected Government. It is therefore desirable, in the light of the prevailing environment, for the Security Council to give some thought to the issues raised in the letter by the President.

In conclusion, it is important to stress that the terrorist attack that took place in Côte d'Ivoire over the weekend has led to cause for concern in Liberia. Given the fragility of our security institutions, we call on the international community to urgently lead coordination efforts with the relevant stakeholders, including regional and subregional groups, on how to ensure that terrorists do not find a foothold in the region.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite the Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7650

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7650th meeting
Thursday, 17 March 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Carr
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-07459 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf:

"The Security Council expresses deep alarm at the situation in South Sudan. The Security Council notes that while the ceasefire has largely held in the former theatre of conflict in Greater Upper Nile, it is deeply concerned with ongoing violence, as reported in briefings to the Security Council on 19 February. The Security Council calls upon the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to uphold its responsibility for the protection of civilians.

"The Security Council expresses particular alarm at credible reports of armed men in Sudan People's Liberation Army uniforms entering the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) protection-of-civilians site and firing on civilians. The Security Council stresses that attacks against civilians, UNMISS personnel, as well as United Nations premises are unacceptable and may constitute war crimes. The Security Council calls upon the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the attack and commends the United Nations for quickly announcing the establishment of a high-level board of inquiry to be convened by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, which will conduct an in-depth investigation into UNMISS response to this incident, and awaits with interest its findings.

"The Security Council condemns reported human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and in this regard expresses deep concern over those detailed in the 11 March 2016 "Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Assessment Mission to Improve Human Rights, Accountability, Reconciliation and Capacity in South Sudan", and the 4 December 2015 UNMISS/OHCHR report "The state of human rights in the protracted conflict in South Sudan". The Security Council expresses deep alarm at the numerous reports of sexual violence in armed conflict. The Security Council also underscores its grave concern at the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation in South Sudan, with an estimated 2.8 million people who are severely food insecure and that humanitarian access continues to be restricted.

"The Security Council underscores its support for the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) Chair, Festus Mogae, and calls on all parties to fully cooperate with him to advance the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (the 'Agreement').

"The Security Council welcomes some progress in the implementation of the Agreement, including the commencement of the work of JMEC, the establishment of some of the transitional security mechanisms, the agreement on the selection of ministerial portfolios, the appointment by President Salva Kiir of Dr. Riek Machar as First Vice President, and the parties' endorsement of the JMEC transitional security arrangements proposal.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the failure of the parties to fully adhere to their commitments to implement the Agreement. In this regard, the Security Council calls for the following steps to be taken:

"1. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO) fully and immediately adhere to the permanent ceasefire in accordance with their obligations under the Agreement.

"2. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan, the SPLM-IO and all other relevant actors extend their full cooperation to complete implementation of the Juba security arrangements as decided by the JMEC Chair and agreed by the parties on 24 February 2016.

"3. The President, the First Vice-President, and Vice-President, as set out in the Agreement,

take up their positions in the Transitional Government of National Unity in Juba.

"4. The parties to the agreement abide by and take no action inconsistent with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development 30-31 January 2016 communiqué, which was subsequently endorsed by the parties and JMEC, on the issue of the Presidential Decree on the creation of 28 new states.

"5. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the SPLM-IO protect civilians and civilian facilities, including schools and hospitals, allow people to move freely, and allow, in accordance with relevant provisions of international law and United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to help ensure the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

"The Security Council expresses its intention to review progress on the steps outlined above no later than 31 March 2016.

"The Security Council underscores the pressing need for accountability for violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in South Sudan, including ongoing violations and abuses that have been reported since the Agreement was signed. The Security Council takes note in this regard of Chapter V of the Agreement, calls for its implementation, and appreciates the 26 September 2015 African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) communiqué, in which the AUPSC requested that the Chairperson of the African Union Commission take all necessary steps towards the establishment of the hybrid court of South Sudan, which will have jurisdiction over serious crimes committed through the end of the transitional period. The Security Council also calls for implementation of the other mechanisms outlined in Chapter V of the Agreement, including the Commission for Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation.

"The Security Council expresses deep concern at reports of repeated violations of the Status of Forces Agreement and underscores the importance of close cooperation on this issue. The Security Council underscores its steadfast support for UNMISS and renews its deep appreciation of the courageous actions taken by UNMISS personnel and troop- and police-contributing countries to protect hundreds of thousands of civilians under threat of physical violence and to stabilize the security situation across South Sudan. The Security Council recognizes the need to strengthen cooperation between the Government of South Sudan and UNMISS to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers and other United Nations and associated personnel, including humanitarian personnel.

"The Security Council reaffirms its unwavering support for the people of South Sudan."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/1.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7651

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7651st meeting
Thursday, 17 March 2016, 4.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2016/225)

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16-07616 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2016/225)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Peru and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Sandra Honoré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/225, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Ms. Honoré.

Ms. Honoré: I would like to express my gratitude to Angola, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for convening today's meeting on Haiti and to all Council members for their continuing support.

(*spoke in French*)

I also take this opportunity to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Haiti.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I would like to especially thank all those countries that contribute troops and police to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), as well as all those Member States that work with us in the process of strengthening stability in Haiti.

(*spoke in English*)

Following the interruption of the electoral process that started in 2015, Haiti stands at a critical juncture in its democratization process. The next few weeks will be decisive for the short- and mid-term prospects for Haiti's democratic consolidation, demanding from all actors involved a good-faith effort that is guided by the interest of the Haitian people.

On 25 October, Haiti held the second of the three electoral rounds planned for 2015, demonstrating progress towards the renewal of its democratic institutions and the re-establishment of institutional balance as enshrined in the Constitution. As a result of those elections, 14 of 20 Senators and 92 of 119 Lower House members were sworn in, establishing the country's fiftieth Legislature and enabling Parliament to resume on the constitutional date of 11 January, ending a year of dysfunction and rule by decree.

This positive momentum came to an end with the postponement of the third electoral round, against a backdrop of mounting tensions over allegations of fraud and increasing security concerns. The risk of yet another governance vacuum was averted by an agreement arrived at on 5 February between former President Martelly and the Presidents of the two chambers of Parliament.

Drawing on the spirit of the Haitian Constitution, the agreement provided a road map for institutional continuity following the end of the presidential term on 7 February. It called for the indirect election, by the National Assembly, of a provisional President for a period of up to 120 days, together with the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the re-establishment of the Provisional Electoral Council to complete the 2015 electoral cycle through elections scheduled for 24 April.

Despite the many efforts deployed by those responsible for the implementation of the agreement, tensions continue to run high, with the political class yet to unite behind a common vision for the political process. While 14 February saw the swearing in of former Senate and National Assembly President Jocelerme Privert as Haiti's provisional President, for some three weeks an impasse persisted over the appointment of a consensus Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Parliament's vote

of confidence in the former's Government programme. In that regard, yesterday's meeting of the Lower House was adjourned, ostensibly because no agreement could be reached over the proposed cabinet.

Concurrently, in consultation with the relevant sectors, steps have been taken to identify the members of the new Provisional Electoral Council. Their installation is, however, stalled pending the confirmation of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. Continued demands are being made for the establishment of an independent electoral verification commission, in respect of which there is as yet no definition of its mandate or composition, that would enhance confidence as the 2015 electoral process continues.

The delays accumulating both in the confirmation of the Prime Minister and in the re-establishment of the Provisional Electoral Council, coupled with uncertainty over the verification of the 2015 electoral process, not only stand to impact the implementation of the agreement and the conclusion of the electoral cycle within the specified timeline of 120 days, but may also prevent a swift return to full constitutional order, thereby prolonging the period of political instability that has plagued the country for far too long. A protracted political crisis may result in deflecting the attention of all actors, Haitians and international partners alike, from sustaining the stabilization gains achieved in recent years. Haiti cannot afford to lose focus in that regard, as it can ill bear further declines in economic growth.

The security situation has remained largely peaceful, albeit fragile, although influenced by the electoral process and related political tensions during the past months. The 25 October polls registered a decrease in security incidents, which is testimony to the continuously growing capacity of the Haitian National Police, which was the primary provider of election security. When I last appeared before the Council (see S/PV.7530), I testified to the increased capacity not only of the police but also of the Provisional Electoral Council and the Government of Haiti to assume greater responsibility in leading the country's electoral process. While the elections on 25 October reflected the leading role played by those key national institutions, the continued engagement of the United Nations system in support of operations, logistics and security and the ongoing financial assistance from Haiti's international partners remain critical to the completion of the electoral cycle and the stabilization of the country.

Equally, in the last year of the implementation of its 2012-2016 development plan, which is supported by MINUSTAH, the Haitian National Police has demonstrated both the commitment and the ability to provide greater security to the Haitian people. Further improvement of specialized capacities and the strengthening of the institution are, however, necessary in order for the national police to be truly self-sustaining. That will require a sustained and strong commitment to the development of the Haitian National Police, within the framework of the broader rule-of-law reforms to be undertaken by the Haitian Government, with the support of Haiti's international partners.

The country's economy is showing signs of fatigue, with public and private investment in drastic decline, growth waning and inflation increasing, which has resulted in a reduction in social spending, a drop in income-generating activities, increased vulnerability to external shocks, and higher exposure to humanitarian crises, against a backdrop of decreasing international funding. Three consecutive years of drought have resulted in poor harvests, plunging 1.5 million Haitian people into severe food insecurity and further testing the resilience of the Haitian people.

In order to tackle those challenges, which impact the daily lives of millions of citizens, and to implement long-term reforms, Haiti needs stable institutions and a capable governance system. There is therefore no alternative to a return, as soon as possible, to the path of institutional and political stability through the completion of the pending elections. A failure to work towards those objectives will have serious consequences in the long term and put at risk the well-being of the Haitian people, who yearn for and deserve stability. Also, Haiti's international friends and partners need assurance that their assistance will continue to have an impact that promotes the interests of the Haitian people.

A strong spirit of compromise among Haitian stakeholders and an equally strong commitment to consensus-building will be key in order for the country to find a way back to full constitutional order. I continue to reiterate this message with a sense of urgency and grave concern to all the actors involved, including to the provisional President and the leadership of both chambers of Parliament.

MINUSTAH's operating environment will be shaped largely by the manner and the timing in which the electoral process is completed. It is therefore of the

utmost importance that the international community take a firm position in support of a solution that ensures that Haiti takes resolute action to continue on a path to democratic consolidation.

As the Council is aware, MINUSTAH has entered the last year of its conditions-based consolidation, and MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team have started work on a joint transition plan. That plan will outline a road map for the progressive disengagement of the Mission from functions that can be assumed by the Government of Haiti or other partners, while identifying areas in which further support is required from international partners, including the United Nations, so as to ensure that the stabilization gains of the past are preserved and that prospects for the long-term viability of key institutions, such as the national police and rule-of-law institutions, are increased.

That preparatory work on transition will feed into the strategic assessment that resolution 2243 (2015) requested the Secretary-General to conduct after the elections with a view to presenting recommendations on the future presence and role of the United Nations in Haiti. In view of the current political uncertainty in the country, the Secretary-General has proposed in his report (S/2016/225) that the strategic assessment be carried out following the completion of the interrupted electoral process. The Secretary-General intends to submit recommendations to the Security Council on the future of MINUSTAH, ahead of the expiration of its mandate in October, separately and apart from electoral developments on the ground.

I thank all my colleagues in MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team for their dedication during this challenging period for Haiti. I also call on all of Haiti's international partners to continue to lend their invaluable support to the country's political process.

Finally, I call on all Haitian actors at all levels to be guided, first and foremost, by their responsibility towards the people of Haiti and to ensure the completion of the electoral process in a climate of serenity.

The President: I thank Ms. Honoré for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Honoré for her briefing, which, together with the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/225), clearly outlines the important strides that Haiti has made in the past several years since the earthquake, as well as the daunting challenges that it continues to face.

I would like to begin by commending the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for its efforts to promote the political process, strengthen the rule of law and promote human rights. In particular, we would like to thank the individual men and women serving in MINUSTAH, as well as the troop- and police-contributing countries, for their tireless efforts on behalf of the Haitian people.

Today, I would like to focus on the immediate issue that is critical to Haiti's future — the expeditious conclusion of the postponed electoral process in Haiti. Completing the electoral cycle is a critical step towards not only installing an elected Government that reflects the will of the Haitian people, but also re-establishing fully functional democratic institutions in Haiti that can make Haiti more stable and more secure. Without the strengthening of democratic institutions and credible democratic processes, there can be no genuine stability or sustainable development in Haiti.

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted in her remarks, a political accord was reached on 5 February, through a Haitian-led political process, to hold the second round of presidential elections on 24 April, followed by the inauguration of a President on 14 May. In order to adhere to that timeline, all Haitian political stakeholders need to commit to swift implementation of the accord. Towards that end, we welcome the commitment made by provisional President Privert to advancing towards completion of the electoral process enshrined in the accord, and we note the important step that he took on 25 February by naming a Prime Minister. But, while some positive steps have been taken towards abiding by the timeline, time is running short for completing the many tasks that remain. One critical next step is to reconstitute the Provisional Electoral Council as soon as possible. We urge the Parliament to play its role in the implementation of the 5 February agreement by voting on the Prime Minister's Government policies without delay in order to facilitate the completion of the electoral process.

Some political actors and observers spread a narrative late last year that included allegations of widespread fraud in the electoral process, challenging the credibility of the elections. That narrative does the Haitian people a real disservice. It was not just unhelpful

but harmful, and greatly undermined the efforts of the Haitian Government, assisted by the international community, to give the Haitian people the opportunity to have their voices heard through a democratically elected Government. I want to note that neither we nor the international observation missions sent by the European Union and the Organization of American States found proof of massive and widespread fraud.

Once the elections are successfully completed, Haiti can focus its energy and resources on strengthening democratic processes and institutions in Haiti, which have been sidelined and overshadowed by the protracted political crisis. For example, the Haitian Government needs to urgently address problems in the justice sector, particularly with regard to prolonged pre-trial detention. Nearly 70 per cent of the prisoners in Haitian prisons have not been formally charged.

Haiti now faces increasing challenges, including drought, a depreciating currency and threats to its food security, among others. Only an elected Government can effectively work with Haiti's many international partners to confront those and other challenges. The strengthening of Haiti's institutions is also necessary in order to sustain and eventually take over the work of MINUSTAH and other international partners. As MINUSTAH prepares to assess the conditions for a further drawdown or reconfiguration of the United Nations Mission, we commend the Haitian National Police on their progress towards improving the country's security environment. We note that the Haitian National Police intends to reach its target strength of nearly 15,000 officers by the end of 2016, and we call for the completion of the road map for the Haitian National Police's growth and professionalization for the next five years. We also call for the continued assistance of the international community with those efforts.

The United States supports the strategic assessment mission on the future presence of the United Nations in Haiti, as requested in resolution 2243 (2015), which is to be initiated following the completion of the elections and the instalment of a new democratically elected President. We also look forward to the joint transition plan currently being drafted by MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team, which will outline a road map for future support by the United Nations, the Government of Haiti and other international partners. Along with the strategic assessment mission, we welcome recommendations from MINUSTAH on the future presence and role of the United Nations in Haiti, and we emphasize that any reconfiguration of United Nations presence should be based on thorough, ongoing analysis of the security situation in Haiti. Using such evidence-based analysis to inform decisions on the United Nations configuration will help avoid hasty changes that could compromise the progress that the Haitian Government and people, along with the international partners, have achieved over the past decade.

The United States has been one of Haiti's international partners for a long time. Working together with the Government of Haiti and the international community, we continue to support and will continue to work to strengthen Haiti's overall security, democratic development and economic growth. Progress on those issues is especially hard when political uncertainty prevails, which underscores the importance of holding elections within the time frame identified in the 5 February accord. We call on all parties to commit to a genuine, free and fair electoral process that is peaceful and uninterrupted, so that Haiti can finally pivot towards the bright future that it so richly deserves.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): I thank Special Representative Honoré for her commitment to Haiti's stabilization, and I wish to acknowledge the important work of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and its contributing countries.

New Zealand is concerned about the recent political turmoil in Haiti and the continued delays in its electoral process. We had hoped that this would be the year in which Haiti would transition from dependence on external partners towards greater self-reliance. We had hoped that today we might have been considering a plan for that transition, one that was the joint product of MINUSTAH and a new Government. We welcomed reports that agreement had been reached to hold elections in the coming months. Sadly, the political manoeuvring over the past three months, including overnight, has seriously undermined progress towards that goal.

It is time for all parties, especially the interim Government, to commit themselves to providing the leadership that Haitians deserve. The consequences of Haiti's continued political uncertainty are not trivial. As the Special Representative emphasized in her briefing, Haiti's economic growth is being directly affected. The humanitarian situation has worsened, with severe

droughts, food insecurity for millions of Haitians and the continuing cholera epidemic.

The timeline for the consideration of the next steps for MINUSTAH and for the United Nations operations in Haiti has also been impacted by the political situation. New Zealand agrees with the Special Representative that it makes more sense to undertake the strategic assessment of the United Nations presence in Haiti following the elections, with a new Government in place. Even so, MINUSTAH can not remain in Haiti indefinitely. We need to make the best use of the time remaining to ensure that Haiti is as well-equipped as possible to manage its own security once the Mission is gone.

We are reassured that MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team are working on a joint transition plan. In addition to setting out clear goals and responsibilities, the plan should consider what tasks MINUSTAH can complete or discontinue before its mandate ends. Ensuring close coordination with national and international partners will be key, including on what residual functions may need to be transferred. For a transition to be sustainable, the plan must have genuine national ownership. Ensuring that core institutions, particularly the police, have the capacity to operate effectively without international support will be a priority. We urge MINUSTAH to engage the new Government on the joint transition plan as soon as possible after the elections.

The United Nations must also continue to combat the ongoing cholera epidemic. We acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations and its partners, particularly those that have contributed to the support plan and the national plan for the elimination of cholera. The United Nations must continue to support those affected in Haiti and take appropriate action to help close that chapter and ensure that the new Government is not left alone to address the ongoing consequences and political legacy of the outbreak.

Given Haiti's cycle of instability and the lessons that the United Nations has learned from other fragile States, we must get MINUSTAH's transition right. Effective transition planning and capacity-building, as well as longer-term international support, will be key to a successful transition. But none of that will produce long-term benefits, unless the political actors in Haiti are willing to act responsibly and peacefully, without violent protests or inflammatory language. We call on the players concerned to set aside personal interests and rivalries and put the interests of their country first. Haitians have a right to expect that, and we hope the Council will remain united in supporting Haiti through this critical period.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing.

Uruguay associates itself with the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, and my remarks will therefore focus on aspects that that intervention does not cover.

Uruguay's commitment to Haiti has been constant, both on the ground and here at Headquarters. On the ground, we have been with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from its launch in 2004 to the present, contributing troops deployed in a joint battalion with Peru, and here at Headquarters, we have chaired the Group of Friends of Haiti since 2009. MINUSTAH has been and still is a very important instrument designed to support Haiti on its road to stability, but Haiti's stakeholders, particularly its political leaders, also have to be committed to that task.

Haiti's challenges are huge, ranging across issues such as poverty, a lack of security, natural disasters, food insecurity, health problems that include water-borne diseases such as cholera, and internally displaced persons, as well as a number of others that, unfortunately, even this list has not covered. It is clear that when a country is facing such serious situations, its political leadership is a key element in overcoming them. However, as the Secretary-General points out in his report (S/2016/225), the opposite has been true of the period from August 2015 until now, which has been one of political uncertainty. In that regard, Uruguay has been very concerned about developments in the political process in Haiti, particularly the fact that the elections originally scheduled for December 2015 have been postponed once again. We appreciate the fact that the political agreement reached on 5 February between the outgoing President, Mr. Martelly, and the presidents of the two chambers of the National Assembly, was the result of a clear process of national ownership that was led, negotiated and agreed to by Haitians. Uruguay hopes that it will now be respected by Haitians.

Resolution 2243 (2015) asked the Secretary-General to send a strategic assessment mission to Haiti in order to make recommendations on the future presence and functions of the United Nations in Haiti, if possible within 90 days after the new President's assumption of office, and ideally after the formation of a new Government. Given the impossibility of complying with those provisions of the resolution, given the political situation in Haiti, the Secretary-General proposes in his latest report that the strategic assessment mandated by the Security Council be carried out once the electoral process has been completed.

Considering Haiti's history, one has to ask if having to make the strategic assessment conditional on the conclusion of the electoral process means that we will end up with neither one nor the other. The result could be the indefinite postponement of the ability to formulate recommendations on the United Nations presence and functions in Haiti in the future, as requested in resolution 2243 (2015). We sometimes get the feeling that, for some Haitian stakeholders, MINUSTAH's presence and the assurances that it gives them are permanent and have resulted in a kind of addiction and hence in the assumption that the Mission will always be there, until MINUSTAH ceases to be part of the solution by becoming part of the problem.

Since we realize that the Council should not allow Haiti's political stakeholders to hold MINUSTAH hostage, we believe that it is therefore essential that, whether or not the electoral process is concluded, the strategic assessment should be carried out and the joint transition plan advanced, with a view to gradually transferring the Mission's functions to the Haitian Government and the United Nations country team. In our view, the strategic assessment could begin as early as in May.

Despite the political situation and the MINUSTAH drawdown, which was decided under the mandate adopted in October 2014, the security situation has not been seriously affected, with the crime rate remaining stable, as the Secretary-General's report shows, including in areas from which the Mission has been withdrawn. In that regard, we would like to highlight the role played by the Haitian National Police and hope that the progress that it has made can be consolidated, thereby enabling the Haitian people to be able to count very soon on an autonomous force capable of ensuring security and order throughout the country.

Considering the enormous efforts that have been expended in Haiti by the United Nations, countries of the region, regional organizations, donors and troop- and police-contributing countries, one would hope that Haiti's political actors, especially the interim President, will show respect for the international community and work constructively to achieve the goals of the 5 February agreement, with a view to concluding the electoral process and installing a constitutional Government as soon as possible. After all the support that Haiti has received, it would be intolerable to see the country's political actors working only to find creative ways to remain in their jobs.

I would like to conclude by saying that Uruguay would like to express its appreciation to the men and women of MINUSTAH — many of whom have lost their lives in the line of duty, including some Uruguayans — for their dedication and commitment to restoring stability in Haiti.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/225) and Special Representative Sandra Honoré for her briefing.

Regarding the political process in Haiti, Spain echoes the Secretary-General's call to all Haitian stakeholders, especially the President and the National Assembly, to work together and implement the political agreement of 5 February by the agreed deadlines.

In a political situation as volatile as that experienced by Haiti, it is particularly relevant that the international community send this message in a firm and unanimous manner. In that regard, it is important to point out that the Prime Minister and the transitional Government designated by President Privert are not consensual and have not been confirmed by the National Assembly. The international community has made significant efforts to assist reconstruction and stabilization in Haiti, particularly in support of elections. If those efforts are not to have been in vain, it is essential that we firmly demand that Haitian politicians adopt a responsible attitude as they pursue the electoral process.

Spain has specifically provided political and financial support to the elections in Haiti, providing financial and human resources to the electoral missions of the Organization of American States and the European Union. In that regard, we deeply regret that the current electoral process has fallen into the current

impasse, as Haiti is undermining the consolidation of its democratic institutions.

I would now like to refer to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Spain thanks MINUSTAH for its excellent work. Its presence is a factor for stability and deterrence, and it is particularly important in the current context of political uncertainty. We take good note of the intention of the Secretary-General to submit recommendations to the Security Council on the future of MINUSTAH before the expiration of its mandate in October. In keeping with resolution 2243 (2015), these recommendations must be based on the strategic assessment mission to be carried out once the electoral process has been concluded 90 days after the new President is sworn in and, ideally, after the formation of a new Government. Spain stresses that these recommendations, in addition to being based on the results of the assessment mission, must address the political and institutional situation of the country and evaluate their impact on stability and security in Haiti. Any assessment of the role and the presence of the United Nations in Haiti once the mandate of MINUSTAH expires should be part of that political and security context and take into account the potential impact of the Mission's eventual exit.

Finally, Spain aligns itself with the statement that will be made shortly by the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Ms. Sandra Honoré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her comprehensive briefing and offer her our full support for her efforts and those of her team.

Haiti is at a crossroads in its history. Over the past few months, the Haitian people have faced immense challenges at all levels — political, economic and humanitarian. Despite all those challenges, in 2015 the Haitian authorities were ready to hold presidential and legislative elections. The political landscape in the country is not altogether different today, although the outbreak of violence before the second round of elections to derail the transitional process and the postponement of the second round of presidential elections could have led to a political regression.

But the will of the Haitian people restored the process to its propr course and demonstrated their resolve to overcome the current political impasse by signing on to the transitional plan and agreeing to hold presidential elections, which have been postponed until 24 April. I note the importance of holding the postponed presidential elections as scheduled in order not to send Haiti into a new political crisis with substantial security, economic and social implications for the Haitian people.

I commend the efforts of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), to which Egypt has contributed a police component. MINUSTAH has played a pivotal role in building the national capacities of Haiti, particularly the security and judicial entities in view of the coming reports on the development of the Haitian National Police addressing the recent violence. In that regard, I appeal to all Member States and troop-contributing countries to continue to support the Haitian National Police and to step up their efforts to complete the building of national institutions by providing logistic support through bilateral cooperation with Haiti. Egypt stands ready to make further contributions in the next phase.

Against that backdrop, we cannot ignore the humanitarian dimensions of the current Haitian landscape. Egypt expresses its concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the difficulties in ensuring funding for the humanitarian crisis. This adds a further impediment to the efforts of the United Nations in support of the efforts of the Government and civil society to alleviate the hardships facing the Haitian people and the country in implementing the strategies to end the cholera epidemic and address the lack of food security for 1.5 million people in Haiti.

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of the joint transition plan prepared by MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team, which includes areas that require the open and substantial support of international partners. We also look forward to receiving the evaluation by the assessment mission sent by the Secretary-General. Egypt would like to stress the importance of the joint transition plan and the assessment of the future needs of Haiti and their impact on the future stability of the country, and of addressing the proposals put forward in that regard. Haitian national stakeholders should also help in setting priorities, as international strategies and programmes would support national efforts. In this context, we call for genuine partnership with the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in order to assist Haiti in a more comprehensive manner and to

facilitate the transition from the instability that Haiti has endured in recent decades.

In closing I would like to express our full support for the nation of Haiti, while expressing Egypt's full confidence in its ability to get through this critical and sensitive stage.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you for convening this debate on the political situation in Haiti. We also appreciate the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/225), which was introduced by his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Ms.Sandra Honoré. I congratulate her and the men and women of the Mission for their ardous work to ensure the stability and development of the Haitian people.

We endorse the statement to be delivered by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, of which we are a member.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continues to support the people and Government of Haiti in strengthening their democratic institutions. Recent violence, which has led to institutional and electoral uncertainty, was overcome by the firm political will of all elements of Haitian society, who in a show of democratic commitment signed the political agreement for institutional continuity on 5 February. The road map that has been established according to constitutional principles has launched what we hope will be a brief institutional transition, with the appointment of a President and Prime Minister, in order to complete the presidential election process in that sisterly Caribbean nation.

We appreciate the fact that, in this effort to preserve institutional continuity and advance the electoral process in Haiti, at the request of the Haitian Government, the good offices of the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States have been deployed. The international community should fully support the decision of the Haitian people to find a political solution to the current crisis, in strict adherence to the principles of the sovereignty, independence and self-determination of that country.

It is also necessary to urge all political and social actors to continue to participate in inclusive and constructive dialogue, in the interests of political stability and institutional strengthening in Haiti. The political tensions of recent months reflect one of the chronic problems facing that sisterly nation, derived from the country's still fragile institutional framework, the product of a history plagued by foreign intervention, coups and brutal dictatorships that have kept the Haitian people in conditions of extreme poverty and political and social exclusion, and that have perpetuated destabilization and political instability, all of which has had disastrous consequences for the stability and sovereign economic development of that nation.

This situation of political and social instability was aggravated by the terrible earthquake that struck Haiti, killing more than 300,000 people and destroying all the country's infrastructure and services. In the current scenario, the grave human impact of the emergence and spread of cholera since 2010 cannot be ignored. More than five years after its appearance, hundreds of cases continue to be recorded each week. In 2015, 322 people died and about 36,000 cases were reported. So far this year, 54 people have died and 5,452 cases have been reported. We encourage the international community to devote more resources to support the measures put forward in the framework of the national plan for the elimination of cholera in Haiti from 2013 to 2022, which help affected families to overcome that public health problem and prevent the disease from becoming endemic.

Similarly, in the humanitarian field, we are concerned about the situation of food insecurity resulting from the drought of recent years, which was caused by climatic imbalances in the Caribbean region. More than 1.5 million Haitians are affected by the consequent decline in crop yields from March to June, which could exacerbate the humanitarian situation and stability of the country.

Venezuela recognizes the work that has been carried out by MINUSTAH in assisting Haitian authorities during the country's stabilization and development process. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the continued improvement of the capacities and professionalism of the Haitian National Police, in accordance with the 2012-2016 strategic plan. The National Police has been highly successful in containing, deterring and controlling public demonstrations following the recent political uncertainty. We believe that, in the light of the current security challenges in Haiti, including those related to the ongoing electoral process, any decision regarding

the future of MINUSTAH should be based on the security and stability of the country within the process of building institutional capacity and in coordination with the authorities of the new Haitian Government.

We appreciate the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his report (S/2016/225) to carry out the strategic assessment referred to in resolution 2243 (2015), after the completion of the electoral process and the establishment of a newly elected Government, in order to assess the future presence and role of the United Nations in Haiti, provided that this process and new elections do not exceed the established deadline of 120 days.

Venezuela is committed to the democratic development and political and social stability of a free and sovereign Haiti. In that regard we consider it necessary to highlight — beyond the episodes of violence — the many positive developments taking place in Haiti, such as the South-South cooperation that has been implemented in that brotherly Caribbean country. Examples of good practices with regard to cooperation in Haiti are many. They have significant social, economic and nutritional impacts and are intended to help strengthen the State, with the participation of the Haitian people. In that context, of particular relevance are the social programmes implemented with the cooperation of Venezuela, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and PetroCaribe. They have contributed to the construction of housing, infrastructure and services and have supplied fuel, all of which are decisive factors for the stability and development possibilities of the country.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasize that Haiti is more than a neighbour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We are united by historical ties of solidarity that go back to the struggle for independence in the nineteenth century, when President Alexandre Pétion decisively supported the Liberator, Simón Bolívar, which we will never forget. We are deeply committed to the present and future of Haiti's people. Anything we are able to do will be insufficient if there is no progress in the building of institutional capacity and in the creation of economic conditions that would make it possible to overcome the poverty afflicting country. In that regard, support and international assistance to achieve these goals are necessary today more than ever. We cannot abandon the Haitian people.

Mr. Meek (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative Honoré for her briefing. As she has made clear today, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti continues to make a welcome contribution to stability and development in Haiti. It is a contribution that is clearly helping what is the poorest, least-developed country in the Western hemisphere. So, I join others in thanking everyone involved in the Mission and in the United Nations Country Team for their ongoing commitment and service.

Today I want to focus on three priorities for Haiti as we see them: the elections, security and the humanitarian situation.

First, like others, we welcome the first two rounds of presidential elections, but it is frustrating that the political process has not been seen through to fruition. A democratically elected and fully functioning Government is essential if Haiti is to address the serious challenges facing the country and its people. We recognize the role of former President Martelly and the presidents of the two chambers of Parliament in securing a way forward with the political accord last month. The international community supports Haitian efforts to implement this agreement. But if it is to succeed, consensus-building within Haiti is needed. It is imperative that the current political and electoral uncertainty is resolved quickly.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2015/225) welcomes the efforts made so far by the provisional president and prime minister. We agree with this. Now, all stakeholders need to work together in good faith to complete the electoral process. This is not a time for political intransigence, for brinkmanship or posturing. Too much is at stake. To give just one example, successful development cooperation with the international community relies on Haiti having a democratically elected and fully functioning Government. Without such interlocutors, there is a risk that we will all be frustrated in our efforts. The people of Haiti deserve better.

Turning to my second point, we are pleased to see the continued expansion of the Haitian National Police. There has been a noticeable improvement in their capabilities and their independence from MINUSTAH, as seen by the security they provided for the elections. But there is still much to do if we are to transition to Haitian-led efforts countrywide. MINUSTAH's continued focus, therefore, should be on developing the

professionalism of the Haitian police. Slow progress in improving the rule of law threatens to undermine this progress. In particular, reform of the justice sector remains weak and needs nurturing. Steps must be taken to ensure there is comprehensive justice for all. This must include addressing serious human rights abuses, including the concerning increase in gender-based violence and rape. All people of Haiti have a right to protection from such abuses.

Turning to my third point, I want to touch upon the humanitarian situation. Despite the welcome recovery since the earthquake and Hurricane Sandy, it is unsettling that so many of Haiti's citizens remain in camps and temporary shelters. These are people who lost everything and yet, six years later, they still have nothing. Rehousing them must be an urgent priority for a new Government. I also want to touch upon the ongoing outbreak of cholera. That terrible disease is a scar on Haitian citizens. After all that they have been through, they cannot afford to face that further assault on their lives and livelihoods. Efforts to protect the population and eradicate cholera from the main water supplies have clearly been ineffective. More needs to be done to defend the vulnerable people of Haiti against cholera and rid Haiti of that pervasive disease.

Let me close by looking to the future. Although challenges remain, we cannot let them distract us from planning beyond 2016 towards a smaller and more focused United Nations presence in Haiti. The development of a joint transition plan by MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team is a good first step, and we look forward to the results of a meaningful strategic assessment mission. But it is becoming increasingly clear that we cannot allow an open-ended electoral process to delay indefinitely a real examination of what comes next. While Haitian leaders need to complete the electoral process, we must not let the political impasse delay the Council's own determination of whether the current deployment is in the best long-term interest of Haiti. We owe it to the people of Haiti to get it right.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for presenting the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/225) and for her substantive briefing on the situation in the country.

We are carefully monitoring the development of the political situation in Haiti, where the electoral campaign has once again encountered serious setbacks. As a result of the worsening inter-party standoff, it proved impossible to elect a new Head of State within the time frame laid out in the Constitution. Nonetheless, we welcome the adoption by Port-au-Prince of a political solution that enabled the National Assembly to elect an interim President, Jocelerme Privert, for a transitional 120-day period. We hope that that compromise will help to ensure institutional continuity, while avoiding a vacuum in the executive branch and moving toward a constructive completion of the electoral process. The electoral marathon for the legislative authorities has been successfully concluded. The fiftieth anniversary session of the Haitian National Assembly assumed its functions in January. The country thereby demonstrated its ability to overcome significant domestic political differences and solve the most difficult problems. We hope that Haiti's political forces will be able to muster the necessary will and restraint in order to successfully elect a President within the established time frame. Numerous difficult economic and other domestic problems also remain on the table.

A well-qualified and properly equipped police force is absolutely crucial for the State to be able to develop successfully. The latest report of the Secretary-General notes a slight decrease in the size of the Haitian National Police. We hope that the reasons for the departure of qualified members of the police force will be analysed and eliminated. MINUSTAH's police contingent could assist the Haitians in that matter, although it is undergoing its own difficulties with regard to providing the necessary personnel. We believe that reaching the target of 15,000 national police, set by Port-au-Prince, by the end of the year is still possible.

The economy in Haiti remains fragile. The country is not demonstrating sufficient economic growth, and the national currency has fallen in value. We believe that those difficulties are not of an extraordinary nature. If there is enough political will, that issue can be fully resolved, as well as the issues of the food shortages and drought. We are concerned by the unstable situation that has resulted from cholera. The number of those afflicted periodically decreases, only to increase later. An important role in that problem should be played by specialized United Nations agencies, international organizations and donors. Where possible, Port-au-Prince should make more significant efforts to inform

the population about the disease and how to avoid contracting it.

We were pleased to learn that, in the coming months, the remaining 7,000 families that fell victim to the devastating earthquake of 2010 will move into permanent homes. That achievement will enable the people of Haiti to overcome, once and for all, the difficult legacy left by that natural disaster, while enabling resources to be directed to other development projects. In October, we are looking forward to carefully studying the outcome of the strategic review and the recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to the future of the United Nations presence in the country. We are convinced that the key role of continuing the successful development of the State and concluding the drawn-out electoral process falls on the shoulders of the country's national authorities.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Honoré, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her efforts and her briefing, which has enabled us to better understand the political, economic and security situation in Haiti and the activities carried out by United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). At the core of the Mission, there are police staff from Senegal, a sign — as if there were a need for one — of Senegal's commitment to its brother nation and the attention that we pay to the ongoing situation there.

We have followed developments in Haiti with great concern, following the announcement that the date for the presidential elections that were originally scheduled for 27 December 2015 with the departure of President Martelly remains undetermined. For that reason, we welcome the agreement concluded on 5 February 2016, which enabled Haiti to overcome the unprecedented political situation of having a vacancy in the Presidency and established a road map seeking to ensure institutional continuity. My delegation therefore calls on all political actors in Haiti to work to ensure that the transition process takes place peaceably, and we call on the interim President, Mr. Privert, to take all measures, within the framework of that process, to break the current impasse in which the country finds itself. On that account, it is fitting to commend the efforts that he has carried out to nominate an interim Prime Minister, put in place a 15-member cabinet and revive the Provisional Electoral Council.

In order to hasten the implementation of measures that could lead to the return of constitutional order, we call on the National Assembly to fully carry out its role in the implementation of the agreement of 5 February by proceeding without further delay on the vote for Prime Minister, in order to facilitate the conclusion of the electoral process. The successful outcome of a transparent and credible electoral process seems to us to be the only way of ensuring the sustainable restoration of the unity and stability of the country. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/225) mentions, the security situation in Haiti, though calm at the moment, remains precarious. While the level of crime remained generally at the same level as during the periods covered in the two previous reports of the Secretary-General, it is nevertheless troubling that there is a greater number of homicides, which reached 567 for the period from 1 September 2015 to 1 March 2016. The number of reported cases of rape, which reached 218, is just as troubling.

My delegation welcomes the commendable efforts carried out by the Haitian National Police to confront the security situation. We particularly welcome the support and training that MINUSTAH brings to the National Police. MINUSTAH must nonetheless further bolster its work to promote stability in the country, in particular by supporting the ongoing political process and strengthening institutions and the rule of law, with a particular focus on promoting and protecting human rights.

My delegation echoes the Secretary-General's appeal to States for contributions to humanitarian assistance. We note with concern the increasing difficulties encountered by the United Nations in supporting the activities of the Haitian authorities. That is especially worrisome because, as we all know, the country finds itself in economic difficulties characterized by low growth and decreasing investment. The country also continues to be exposed to such crises as drought, lack of safe drinking water, poor infrastructure, health care and sanitation, and endemic diarrhoea.

In conclusion, my delegation commends the progress made by MINUSTAH and offers its thanks and support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Ms. Honoré, as she carries out her work. My delegation eagerly looks forward to receiving the Secretary-General's recommendations on the future

of the Mission before the expiration of its mandate in October.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. China listened carefully to the briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Honoré.

Thanks to the joint efforts of all parties, the interim Government of Haiti has been established. The second round of presidential elections is scheduled to be held in April, and a new Government is expected to be formed in May. We hope that this process will create new opportunities for peace and stability in Haiti.

The recent situation in Haiti has been calm on the whole, but it is still complex and fragile. The security situation has deteriorated, and the country faces difficulties in economic development and a grim humanitarian situation. It still has a long way to go in peacebuilding and reconstruction. China hopes that the international community will focus its assistance on the following three areas.

First, we must do all we can to facilitate the holding of elections on schedule. China hopes that all parties in Haiti will remain united and resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation in order to maintain the country's stability and create conditions conducive to the holding of the second round of presidential elections and the establishment of the new Government. We hope that the relevant regional organizations will continue to provide assistance and support to the electoral process on the basis of respect for Haitian ownership.

Secondly, we should help Haiti to accelerate its economic development and improve its humanitarian situation. The Haitian Government should take the long view, strive for development — which is the master key to solving its problems — formulate its development strategy in the light of the country's situation, improve infrastructure and the investment environment, step up its efforts in agriculture, tourism and other important sectors, enhance its capacities in epidemic prevention and disaster relief, advance the rule of law, increase its support for the displaced, and enhance social synergies. The international community should honour its commitments to Haiti in a timely manner and disburse funds for humanitarian relief so that the Government can achieve development as soon as possible.

Thirdly, proper arrangements must be made for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Under the leadership of its Head, Ms. Honoré, MINUSTAH has played an important role in advancing Haiti's electoral process and maintaining security and stability in the country, for which China offers its thanks. Pursuant to resolution 2243 (2015), the future of MINUSTAH will be placed on the Council's agenda following the elections. China hopes that, based on the full assessment of the country's security situation and enhanced communication with the Government, the Secretariat and the Council will come up with reasonable and feasible arrangements concerning the future of MINUSTAH that will ensure stability in Haiti and the smooth functioning of the new Government.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I too thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her comprehensive briefing, and reassure her of the full support of France for her work on the ground.

I endorse the statements to be delivered by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

I will address three points in my statement: our strong concern over the interruption of the ongoing electoral process; our desire to revive consideration, in due course, of the reconfiguration of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH); and France's support for the development of Haiti.

France is deeply concerned over the interruption of the electoral process in Haiti and by its resulting uncertainties. More than ever before, Haiti needs stable institutions that are vested with democratic legitimacy so as to be able meet the many economic, social and humanitarian challenges the country faces. The Haitian people must also be able to see that the choices they make through the ballot box are properly reflected and respected.

France has taken note of the inter-Haitian political agreement of 5 February. It is a compromise in the right direction that prevents a vacuum of governance and lays the foundations of a continuation of the electoral process. The success of the agreement remains nonetheless closely linked to the effective implementation of all its provisions as soon as possible. We call on all Haitian political actors, including the Provisional President, to do their utmost to make that happen and to ensure the restoration of constitutional order as soon as possible. Everyone must demonstrate

responsibility and restraint and comply with the spirit of compromise of the agreement of 5 February.

It is particularly important that the necessary measures be taken to enable the conclusion of the electoral process in accordance with the agreed timetable. The timely operationaliztion of an inclusive transitional Government confirmed by Parliament, as well as the reactivation of the Provisional Electoral Council, are essential and urgent steps in that regard. The Election Observation Mission of the European Union has concluded that, despite some irregularities, mostly due to the inadequate training of election officials, there was no significant alteration of the outcome of the first round of presidential elections. Nothing therefore precludes the results proclaimed by the Provisional Electoral Council from forming the basis for the organization of the second round.

More than 11 years after the creation of MINUSTAH, the conditions on the ground have changed significantly, as has the form of the United Nations presence that the country needs. We have gradually moved on from a peacekeeping situation to a context in which the United Nations contribution is needed in development assistance and the building of a robust State of law. It is by recognizing this new reality that we will be able to deliver the most effective assistance possible to the Haitian people. Long-term security and stability in Haiti depend above all on the Haitian authorities shouldering their responsibilities and on the island's sustainable development.

France is pleased to note that the security situation is generally stable. According to the latest statistics issued by the United Nations system, the homicide rate in Haiti is now among the lowest in the region. While the situation remains precarious, due to the political tensions raised by the interruption of the electoral cycle, these tensions have been managed competently by the Haitian security forces. We welcome the ongoing strengthening of the Haitian National Police, as demonstrated by its ability to control recent events successfully and with relative autonomy.

We support the continuation of discussions on the future of MINUSTAH, based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General announced in his latest report (S/2016/225). We look forward to the presentation of those recommendations before the current mandate expires in October. To that end, we believe that it is important to underscore that the resumption of the mission-reconfiguration process cannot be delayed indefinitely by the current political stalemate, because that might jeopardize the United Nations capacity to best respond to the needs of the Haitian people.

France is a longtime friend of Haiti and was one of its first partners in development assistance, both bilaterally and through the European Union. The President of the French Republic recently recalled the priority of our commitment to Haiti and announced, during his visit in May 2015 to Port-au-Prince, a bilateral contribution of €50 million for the education sector over the next five years.

We remain concerned about the many challenges facing the country, in particular in terms of child protection. At the request of the Haitian authorities, the French President announced in May 2015 the launch of an ambitious bilateral cooperation programme for Haitian young people in general and for the Haitian education system in particular. However, France is also working to combat food insecurity and sanitation issues, given the resurgence of cases of cholera in 2015. On that point, France fully supports the efforts to that end undertaken by the Haitian authorities with the support of the United Nations, and has contributed to several projects on the ground in that area since 2010. France echoes the call of the Secretary-General for the international community to strengthen its engagement on that theme, including financially. We must do more as an international community to eradicate cholera in Haiti once and for all.

The support of the international community and the commitment of the United Nations remain more important than ever in Haiti. However, our responsibility in the Council is to do everything to ensure that that commitment be as relevant and effective as possible. The challenges that Haiti is encountering and the expectations of its people mean that we must take the necessary decisions. Haitian political stakeholders must be fully aware of that fact today.

Mr. Akahori (Japan): I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Sandra Honoré, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her comprehensive briefing and for her leadership of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Japan welcomes the most recent report (S/2016/225) of the Secretary-General on MINUSTAH, which gives evidence of positive signs of progress and developments in Haiti with regard to the elections, the

security situation and the strengthened capacity of the municipal authorities.

The long-overdue elections in Haiti were held in a generally calm atmosphere last year in August and October. We note that, during the electoral process, MINUSTAH was called upon to intervene only in a few cases. That attests to the increased capacity of the Haitian National Police, which is the result of the tireless work of MINUSTAH. Japan commends the Government of Haiti, MINUSTAH and the international community, which have worked and are working together for the success of the elections. However, the final round of voting has been postponed several times and is still pending.

The elections will mark an important milestone along the path towards stabilization and social and economic development in Haiti. With that conviction, Japan contributed $5.5 million to the electoral process last year. Japan sincerely hopes that the final round will be carried out in a fair, inclusive and smooth manner, as scheduled, on 24 April.

I listened carefully to the cautious vision with regard to the still uncertain political schedule ahead expressed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Japan calls on all the relevant actors in Haiti to fully cooperate in the formation of a provisional Government so that the Provisional Electoral Council can be relaunched officially. That is essential for the successful completion of the elections as scheduled.

In the 12 years since the establishment of MINUSTAH, the situation in Haiti has shown some positive changes. The country's institutions have better capacity than before. However, much remains to be done. As many members mentioned, Haiti now needs assistance in strengthening the rule of law, the protection of human rights, further institution-building and development.

We believe that, when significant progress is made by an United Nations mission, the mission size should be reduced and eventually the mission should be withdrawn in a successful manner. In that regard, Japan appreciates that MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team are working on a joint transition plan to transfer the Mission's functions to the Government of Haiti or its partners.

Haiti is a very fragile country and still faces numerous challenges. The gains achieved by the Government, MINUSTAH and other partners must be maintained and further enhanced. As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Honoré stressed, the international community and the United Nations system should continue to support Haiti.

We look forward to discussing the future United Nations presence in Haiti, based on recommendations of the strategic assessment to be carried out by the Secretary-General at the most appropriate time.

Japan has contributed more than $200 million towards the reconstruction and nation-building of Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake. We have also deployed 2,200 personnel of our Self-Defence Forces to MINUSTAH.

In conclusion, I would like to express Japan's firm commitment to remain actively engaged in supporting the efforts of Haiti towards nation-building.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): As mentioned by earlier speakers, Haiti has seen significant political developments in recent months, most notably in the holding of legislative, presidential and municipal elections in August and October.

I wish to express my appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Honoré for her briefing, to which we listened intently, and to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/225). Malaysia believes that the Council's discussion today is important in enabling us to take stock of the developments in Haiti with a view to assisting the country in charting its future course.

While welcoming the recent holding of elections in Haiti, my delegation notes that they were beset by a number of challenges, including the repeated postponement of presidential elections and allegations of fraud and vote manipulation. Other challenges, such as low voter turnout and the general insecurity felt by the population during the voting exercise and during the period immediately afterwards, show a lack of political space for all. Against that background, we commend the initiative of the Provisional Electoral Council in having taken certain proactive measures for the October round of elections. In the light of the lessons learned from the August round, former President Martelly's establishment of the Independent Electoral Evaluation Commission is also commendable. Looking ahead, we believe that a revitalized and newly reconstituted Provisional Electoral Council, free from allegations of

bias or manipulations, could contribute positively to the conclusion of the current electoral cycle. The ability to organize the next round of elections in a peaceful, transparent and inclusive manner would certainly help to restore public confidence in Haitian State institutions and democracy in the country.

Malaysia commends the Haitian National Police for its role in maintaining peace and security during the election process. The fact that the police and military of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) were only requested to step in on a few occasions is testament to the national police's competence. Undoubtedly, the professionalism and impartiality shown by the national police must be further encouraged and enhanced with a view to cementing the population's trust. We also pay tribute to MINUSTAH, especially its police and military components, for its important role in providing the broader security blanket during the tense election period. In the light of the political developments, Malaysia welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations for a strategic assessment of the future presence and role of the United Nations in Haiti, which should commence after the inauguration of the new President.

While regretting that the presidential elections were not concluded by the 7 February deadline, we are nevertheless optimistic that the provisional Government, led by Jocelerme Privert and Prime Minister designate Fritz Alphonse Jean, will be able the conclude the third electoral round within the agreed timelines. In reaffirming support for a Haitian-led and Haitian-owned road map for the swift conclusion of the current electoral cycle, Malaysia believes that both the President and the Prime Minister-designate have a critical role to play in bridging differences and in galvanizing broad support and consensus across the spectrum of the political class and the wider public in moving the political process forward. In noting that a large portion of elections to the legislature has been completed, my delegation notes that no woman candidates were elected to either chamber of the legislature. We encourage the Government and the Haitian political establishment to reflect seriously on this and to consider taking the appropriate measures to ensure that women's voices are adequately represented.

We are encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the Haitian authorities and the United Nations in the surveillance, rapid-alert and coordinated response to the cholera epidemic, which has seen the lowest rate since its outbreak in 2010. On a related note and in the interest of achieving closure and justice for the victims, we would encourage greater engagement by the Secretariat with those victims, particularly on the issue of possible remedies and compensations, where appropriate. It is important for the continuing credibility of and respect for the United Nations as a whole that the Secretary-General exercise and demonstrate leadership on this issue, including by responding to the letter of allegations from the Human Rights Council special procedures.

On the human rights situation of children in Haiti, our attention is drawn to the situation of some 200,000 children who are vulnerable to exploitation and to physical, emotional and sexual abuse through the practice of *restavek*. We call upon the Haitian authorities to address this issue and to possibly consider and implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Finally, Malaysia reiterates its appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Honoré for her leadership and to the entire MINUSTAH team for their sustained and exemplary contributions in leading the United Nations and the international community's support for Haiti.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Ms. Sandra Honoré, for her briefing.

Before I turn to the points my delegation would like to make, I note that Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

Despite daunting challenges, the Haitian people have made significant progress towards political stability after the devastating earthquake of 2010. We therefore believe in Haitians' ability to overcome the political uncertainty at hand and to find a Haitian-owned solution so as to bring long-term unity and stability to the country. Ukraine commends the efforts of all political stakeholders aimed at finding consensus and constructive solutions that will conclude the electoral process in Haiti. The agreement of 5 February, reached between the ex-President Martelly and the Presidents of the two chambers of Parliament, reflects the spirit of the Constitution and provides a road map for institutional continuity.

We welcome the election by the National Assembly of the provisional President and Prime Minister, as well as the agreement to complete the presidential, legislative and local elections by 24 April, which will give Haiti an opportunity to re-energize its democratic institutions and to move forward in addressing the serious social and development challenges. Ukraine reaffirms its support for credible, transparent and secure elections that will reflect the will of the Haitian people and are conducted in accordance with Haitian law and the Haitian Constitution. In that light, we want to emphasize that electoral intimidation, the destruction of property and violence are unacceptable and run counter to democratic principles, laws and values. In that regard, we commend the Haitian National Police for their efforts to contain the violence and to protect the civilian population, as well as the role played by MINUSTAH in stabilizing what could potentially become an explosive situation. We urge all parties to avoid setbacks, remain calm and refrain from violence.

My delegation would like to underline the importance of the continued efforts of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and other multilateral agencies, as well as Member States, in supporting Haiti's critical needs. The increase in cholera cases in 2015, outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/225), and the ongoing plight of 59,000 internally displaced persons in the aftermath of 2010 earthquake are of great concern and require the continued attention of the international community.

The current fragile situation in Haiti highlights very clearly that the activities of MINUSTAH remain of high importance to Haiti. Yet we fully agree that its composition has to evolve along with the evolution of the situation in the country. In that context, Ukraine sees a great deal of merit in carrying out the strategic assessment envisaged in resolution 2243 (2015), and looks forward to the recommendations of the Secretary-General for the future configuration of the Mission ahead of its mandate expiration in October.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Angola.

I welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to this debate, and I commend the work of Ms. Sandra Honoré and the staff of MINUSTAH for their meaningful contribution to peace and stability in Haiti.

It is an honour for Angola to preside over this debate on Haiti at a time of renewed hope, as attested by the latest political developments with the signing of the political agreement on 5 February by the country's executive and legislative branches, followed by the handover of power. The election by the National Assembly in February of Mr. Jocelerme Privert as Haiti's provisional President marked a crucial development in the country's political life by permitting institutional and political continuity until the completion of the outstanding third electoral round on 24 April, which will, we hope, permit the inauguration of the new President on 14 May. We welcome and congratulate Mr. Jocelerme Privert and Prime Minister Fritz Jean, and wish them all the best with the appointment of a new Cabinet, the revitalization of the Provisional Electoral Council and the further strengthening of the inter-Haitian dialogue by involving all national actors across the Haitian political spectrum.

Even though the overall political and security environment was primarily influenced by the electoral process, a surge of protests took place, both peacefully and violently. The overall level of criminality remains stagnant despite the withdrawal of the military from the Cité Soleil and Port-au-Prince departments, which registered the highest crime and gang-related violence in the country. The country's recent developments are in sharp contrast to the tense political situation of a year ago when we visited Haiti, when the political deadlock forced the paralysis of Parliament for several months, further compounded by its failure to hold the third electoral round in December 2015, thereby creating a volatile political climate marred by violent protests and political unrest, which MINUSTAH played a critical role in mitigating.

We note with satisfaction the joint work of the Government of Haiti, MINUSTAH, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services and other international partners throughout the electoral process in providing technical and logistical support, including the training of electoral staff, outreach and civic education campaigns, which have had a meaningful impact on the Provisional Electoral Council's work.

We also commend the ongoing partnership between MINUSTAH, the Haitian National Police and other institutions related to law enforcement. Such long-term partnerships have made a decisive contribution to the creation of a more secure environment during

the unpredictable transition period, with an overall reduction in violence and improvement in humanitarian conditions, while paving the way for the successful implementation of the 2012-2016 national police development plan.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations on the future of MINUSTAH before its mandate ends. MINUSTAH's presence will enable the consolidation of achievements in key areas of governance, such as the ability of various municipalities to implement administrative and financial procedures; recruit, train and accredit key personnel; and develop and standardize tools and procedures for financial management and transparency. We would like to reiterate our total support for the Mission in its efforts to achieve its priorities, including in the area of security sector reform, which will ultimately ensure a climate of stability, a prerequisite for the expansion of direct foreign investment, and which, after several decades of economic stagnation, will enable the national economy to grow.

We take positive note of the current work between MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team on a road map for the Mission's gradual disengagement, particularly from those tasks that can be assumed by the Government or its partners. The joint transition plan is also aimed at identifying areas in which further support from international partners, including the United Nations, is needed. That is crucial to ensuring lasting peace in a Caribbean country that has been the victim of several man-made and natural disasters in the past decade, including the devastating earthquake of 2010. Along with the entire international community, in the coming months Angola hopes to see further improvements in the political climate, the accession of a new, democratically elected President and the establishment of an enduring environment conducive to socioeconomic development — all of them decisive indicators of MINUSTAH's performance and success after 12 years in the country.

Similarly, we look forward to the results of the strategic assessment upon the completion of the interrupted electoral process, as stipulated in resolution 2243 (2015) and reinforced in the 5 February agreement between Haiti's political stakeholders. We stand firm with Haiti and its political actors, the Security Council and the international community in ensuring that MINUSTAH's withdrawal from the country is carefully planned and a favourable environment is in place when the Haitians take charge of their country's destiny.

Finally, we call on all actors across the Haitian political spectrum to continue working to strengthen the rule of law, create conditions conducive to social and economic development and ensure justice and the protection of the human rights of all Haitians.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the Security Council for inviting the Haitian delegation to comment on the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2016/225) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). I have the honour to convey to the Council the greetings of the interim President of the Republic of Haiti, Mr. Jocelerme Privert, who was elected on 14 February by the National Assembly and whose key mandate, as he himself defined it in his inauguration address, is to see the electoral process completed according to the timetable prescribed in the 5 February agreement. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Haiti, Ms. Sandra Honoré, for their unwavering commitment to consolidating the rule of law and democracy in Haiti and their leadership in implementing MINUSTAH's mandate.

We have carefully reviewed the report submitted to the Security Council and taken note of its recommendations. We commend the Secretary-General for the report's precision, objectivity and balance, which covers the full extent of the political crisis that led to the interruption of the electoral process in December and January, while highlighting its economic and financial repercussions and its implications for the country's security and development.

While the report states that in the past few years Haiti has unquestionably made progress towards establishing the rule of law, it nevertheless lists its weaknesses and structural deficiencies and the obstacles in the way of the people's full realization of their human rights, as well as the setbacks and delays we have experienced in establishing and sustaining democracy and implementing some essential legal reforms. Above all, the Secretary-General emphasizes how important it is that all of Haiti's stakeholders work to end the electoral

uncertainty and overcome the current political crisis by completing the elections, whose success will be a clear indication of the country's progress in terms of political stability and the entrenchment of a democratic culture.

The next elections, scheduled for this spring, will undoubtedly function as a test of democracy in Haiti and its long-term stability and development. Mr. Privert, the interim Head of State, is well aware of his historical responsibility in that regard for organizing the free and transparent elections that are essential to ensuring the renewal of our institutions and consolidating the democracy, the rule of law and stability that will be so vital to our country's modernization. In that regard, the Haitian authorities reiterate to the Council and the international community as a whole their commitment to ensuring that the outcome of the electoral process reflects the Haitian people's expression of their will at the polls.

For that reason, from the moment the interim President took office, he has worked systematically to conduct a dialogue with the country's political class and consult with the representatives of the full range of parties and political opinions in order to tackle the immediate principal challenge, which is re-starting the presidential, parliamentary, municipal and local election process begun in August 2015, in accordance with the agreement's stipulations, which since 7 February have enabled us to circumvent the institutional vacuum and maintain social peace and public order. The main goal is to ensure the transfer of power to a president elected democratically and in a transparent manner by 14 May.

The conditions crucial to ensuring that the electoral process gets under way are coming together. Since he took up highest office on 14 February, the President of the Republic, following broad consultations with all political stakeholders and civil society, sought to appoint a new Prime Minister, Mr. Fritz Alphonse Jean, on 25 February, in line with the amended Haitian Constitution. A consensus Government was established and the names of all members of the new ministerial Cabinet were made public. The appointed Prime Minister submitted his credentials to the Haitian Parliament on 1 March so that it could rule on his eligibility. He then submitted his general policy statement to the Chamber of Deputies on Monday, 14 March. The Prime Minister is currently waiting for his general policy statement to be ratified by Parliament.

In the context of consultations, the interim President wrote to different sectors of national life that had appointed members to the previous Provisional Electoral Council to ask them to propose eminent persons who could join that electoral body. Responses were received from all sectors. On 9 March, the names of nine members of the Provisional Electoral Council were made public. Their aim is to re-establish confidence in the electoral process and to organize exemplary elections throughout the country. They are to be sworn into office before the Council of Ministers. To that end, Parliament must validate the general policy statement of the Prime Minister and the new Government needs to take charge of the management of the State.

It is therefore important and extremely judicious to underscore that the agreement of 5 February for institutional continuity was signed by the executive and legislative branches. It is the fruit of constructive, consensual political dialogue among Haitians. The agreement enabled a governance vacuum to be avoided, with all its potential consequences for stability. To that end, it should be noted that the agreement makes both signatory parties co-responsible for its application and implementation. President Privert is working on a daily basis, in the context of his work and mandate as Head of State, to respect the agreement and ensure that it is respected, hoping that nothing will slow down or go against efforts for the normalization of political life.

Nobody should underestimate the scale of the task of managing a very complex electoral process in a relatively short period of time. However, Haitian institutions have already demonstrated their ability to assume responsibility for and to conduct the process. Haitian authorities are convinced that they will be able to meet the challenge and their mission. Whatever the case may be, the solidarity and the cooperation of all of Haiti's partners, particularly in terms of logistics, financial and operational issues, will be crucial and fundamental to assisting the Haitian public authorities and the Electoral Council, which are firmly resolved to ensure that the process is successfully concluded.

The support of MINUSTAH for the Haitian National Police with a view to improving the security environment is crucial to the success of the process. The recent street demonstrations that took place in Port-au-Prince and various provincial towns during the post-electoral crisis expressed the commitment of the Haitian people to democracy. They also reflected the desire and the demands of the people to see through to

the end an electoral process that takes into consideration in full transparency all votes expressed through the ballot box.

While the success of the forthcoming election is undoubtedly at the heart of all our concerns, we cannot fail to mention a number of other large-scale challenges currently facing Haiti, particularly in the economic, humanitarian and development sectors. Food insecurity in particular is already affecting more than 3.5 million people. It doubled over a six-month period and, in the light of the ongoing drought, we fear that it may turn into a disaster if appropriate measures and necessary assistance are not quick in coming. It is also a matter of national urgency, to which the Haitian authorities are responding by turning to the mechanisms of solidarity and bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

In addition, there is a significant deterioration in the sanitation and health situation, in particular following an upsurge in the cholera epidemic and the emergency of the Zika virus, as underscored in the report. In that regard, my delegation cannot but be very concerned about the significant decrease in influx of official development assistance, as well as the draconian reduction in humanitarian aid, which, as the Secretary-General has underscored, plummeted to from $155 million in 2014 $55 million in 2015. That has resulted in a significant reduction in the ability of the Haitian Government to intervene among the most destitute and affected Haitians while the country faces serious economic and financial difficulties and a very delicate political situation. All social appeasement measures and all efforts required to respond to and meet the urgent needs of the population are critical. The Haitian Government therefore invites its international partners to assess the scale of the challenges and to assist it by providing rapid and specific responses that are commensurate with the urgency of the situation.

The report also addresses the question of the progressive disengagement of MINUSTAH and the necessary evolution of the Mission after almost 12 years in Haiti. The Haitian authorities support the recommendations of the Secretary-General and his proposal to undertake a strategic assessment review following the elections regarding the future role of the Mission. The authorities assure the Security Council of their willingness to contribute to this review. In the meantime, we believe it useful to recall the fundamental position of Haiti on the outline of the planned reconfiguration for MINUSTAH.

The profile of the future Mission must take fully into consideration the evolution of the situation on the ground. To that end, the smooth running of the forthcoming elections must be a key indicator in terms of assessing our medium- and long-term needs and the future support of Haiti's partners. As the Haitian authorities have always underscored, what is key is to ensure the sustainability of the achievements of the past 12 years of the MINUSTAH presence, particularly in terms of security, and to allow the Haitian institutions to gradually and effectively assume the functions that to date have been borne by the Mission.

In any event, with the new proposed configuration, the Haitian Government is in favour of maintaining and strengthening the support components of the National Police and judicial system. It is in favour of continued support for prison administration and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security in order to substantially reduce the number of detainees in prolonged detention and, at the same time, to improve the conditions of detention centres in our prisons.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to all friendly countries, all of Haiti's cooperation partners and the United Nations — in particular the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Office for Project Services and MINUSTAH — for their unwavering commitment alongside national institutions in the recent electoral process. At this crossroads, the Haitian authorities would like to be able to count on their continued support to enable the new Provisional Electoral Council to quickly get up to speed and carry out its substantial and pressing mission efficiently and effectively. The Haitian authorities reiterate to all partners in the international community their assurance that they will spare no effort to ensure the success of the upcoming elections, the credibility, transparency and integrity of which will guarantee the peaceful transition and the sustainable stability that the Haitian people have consistently called for.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the delegation of Angola for convening this debate and Ms. Sandra Honoré both for her presentation of the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/225) and for her leadership of the United

Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) at this crucial stage in Haiti's future.

The elections scheduled for 24 April in Haiti are without a doubt the focus of this meeting for all interested in the future of the country. Although the two rounds held in 2015 were a reflection of the significant progress Haiti has made since the 2010 earthquake, the electoral round scheduled for next month may be the turning point for the consolidation of a political process. Although it has not been without its challenges, it promises to provide the Haitian people with a renewed voice in its governance and to move forward the restoration of constitutional order. Mexico calls on all Haitian political actors to enable the speedy revitalization and renewal of the Provisional Electoral Council, to act in an appropriately responsible manner, and to preserve security and stability during the delicate transition period under way.

As the Secretary-General warns in his latest report, the progress made so far is fragile and could suffer setbacks. Violence and other instances of public unrest linked to the electoral process constitute a latent concern among members of the international community, and the country's vulnerability to humanitarian crises is not a negligible challenge.

My delegation is particularly concerned about the short- and medium-term challenges of malnutrition and the persistence of cholera in Haiti. In 2015 alone, just over 36,000 suspected cases of cholera were recorded — 9,000 more than in the previous year. And according to the Ministry of Health, since its emergence, the epidemic has cost the lives of more than 9,000 people and infected nearly a million Haitians. Let us not allow solvable humanitarian challenges to increase the number of threats to the present and the future of Haiti. Improved vigilance, rapid alert and a coordinated response from Haitian authorities and the United Nations, as well as strategic investment in water infrastructure, health and sanitation, are essential. Mexico reaffirms its commitment to continuing to promote action in priority areas for Haitian development in the areas of agriculture, health, socioeconomic development, the environment and education, and we will continue to assist and strengthen the regional efforts led by the Organization of American States.

The report presented today by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General could not be clearer. It provides a detailed analysis of the challenges, risks and opportunities in Haiti. First of all, it shows us the vital role that MINUSTAH continues to play in the daily life of the country and the pressing need for their presence to be maintained for as long as circumstances require. The role of MINUSTAH in institution building, national security, promoting the rule of law and human rights, its humanitarian support and promotion of development, should be transferred to Haitians progressively. We support the recommendations of the Secretary-General for a gradual reconfiguration of the Mission, based on the premise of overall stability, security conditions and strengthened capacity of the Haitian National Police, which is showing significant progress, and we welcome the establishment of a unit for the investigation of sexual and gender-based violence in the Central Directorate of the Judicial Police. We also support the proposal that the strategic evaluation mission for the transition of MINUSTAH be carried out once the electoral process is completed, and we hope that the result will reflect a fair balance between the situation on the ground and assessment of the country's real institutional capacities.

History has shown us on many occasions that the time tables set for peacekeeping operations can be counterproductive. The accelerated withdrawal of the Mission could lead to the re-emergence of political instability, with immeasurable consequences. We believe that it is a priority to consolidate progress without compromising security. The success of our collective mission requires the commitment of all stakeholders to ensure consensual Haitian solutions to the country's problems. That is an essential component for the unity and stability of Haiti in the long term.

In conclusion I wish to highlight Mexico's gratitude for the countries that contribute troops and police to Haiti, for the Group of Friends. and for all those who are part of MINUSTAH and continue to work to lay the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful Haiti.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. de Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) (*spoke in French*): I thank Angola for having organized this debate. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sandra Honoré, for her briefing. Brazil reiterates its respect and unwavering support for the consolidation of peace and democracy in Haiti. I also take note of the statement of the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Ambassador Régis.

(*spoke in English*)

Brazil welcomes the holding of two electoral rounds last year in Haiti, which enabled the Haitian Parliament to resume functioning on 11 January. We also acknowledge the efforts by Haitian institutions to take corrective measures to address irregularities and improve the electoral process. While regretting the postponement of the presidential run-off, we recognize the importance of the inter-Haitian political agreement achieved on 5 February, which avoided a governance vacuum. We expect the political dialogue that has been promoted by the provisional President, Jocelerme Privert, to allow for the normalization of the country's democratic life with the completion of presidential elections. Brazil calls on all stakeholders to engage constructively during the process leading to the next round of elections. Allow me to recognize, in that regard, the key role of mediators from the United Nations, Organization of American States, Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community, who are providing the necessary space and support for inter-Haitian dialogue.

We acknowledge that there are reasons for concern in the area of security, including in the context of the pending round of elections. Despite the enhanced performance of the Haitian National Police in preventing crime and controlling civil unrest, there was an increase in the number of homicides and a peak in violence in February, as reported by the Secretary-General, including murder, attacks against police stations and private property, armed confrontation among rival gangs and violent demonstrations in Port-au-Prince. We deeply regret the death of two United Nations police officers killed by gunshot in December 2015.

We concur with the view of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that the deterrence provided by troops continues to be essential to reduce violent demonstrations and crime in certain areas. Therefore, we support the continued visible and mobile posture of the uniformed personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We also encourage the Haitian National Police to benefit from the Mission's efforts to ensure a successful handover of responsibilities for security in critical areas. In that context, it is worth underlining that the number of staff of the Haitian National Police is still short of the target set for 2016.

In a context of negative economic trends in Haiti, the country's resilience was again put to test. The three years of drought have resulted in crop losses and an increase in food prices. Recent floods led to the establishment of additional camps for internally displaced persons and an increase in the number of cholera cases in the country. That very difficult scenario still requires the sustained attention of the international community.

Brazil notes with concern a sequence of reductions in MINUSTAH's quick-impact and community violence-reduction projects. We believe that those important mandated tools are crucial to promote a culture of peace and the rule of law and, ultimately, to consolidate stability.

In addition to our support for elections in Haiti and our comprehensive humanitarian cooperation with the country, Brazil is committed to maintaining its current special immigration policy for Haitians to ensure an appropriate entry and dignified welcome to those migrants in our country.

We concur with the view of the Secretary-General that the deployment of the strategic assessment mission should be carried out after the completion of the interrupted electoral process, ideally after the formation of the new Government. In that regard, we underline that the assessment mission should take into account the concrete situation on the ground and avoid prejudgments on its outcome. Close and effective coordination with the Government of Haiti will remain a decisive requirement in that context.

(*spoke in French*)

Despite the concern caused by the political crisis that led to the postponement of the second round of presidential elections, Brazil will continue to support the solutions that, we are sure, Haitians themselves will determine. We hope that a constructive and positive attitude on the part of Haitian political stakeholders will lead to the finalization of the ongoing process and contribute to the achievement of fair and transparent elections. We urge the Haitian leadership to continue to work to entrentch the social compact and to strengthen democracy in the country — a definitive transition is up to the Haitian people. A transition from the instability of the past to a future rooted in the origininal Haitian dream that inspired an entire region to fight for its independence as a way of ensuring a dignified life of

freedom for all. We will continue to support our Haitian brethren in pursuit of that goal.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, which includes Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the United States, France, Guatemala, Uruguay, Venezuela and my own country, Peru. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President for organizing this debate to discuss the latest report (S/2016/225) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

The Group of Friends welcome the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Ms. Sandra Honoré, and thanks her for her comprehensive briefing and for the intensive work she is doing.

Strengthening the rule of law and democratic institutions, the establishment of a political culture that promotes democratic stability and improving socioeconomic conditions are key elements in achieving greater security, stability and prosperity in Haiti. The Group of Friends welcomes the continuing efforts of the United Nations, other multilateral agencies, regional organizations and States Members of the United Nations to support the critical needs of Haiti. In that connection, the Group expresses its concern about the continued suspension of electoral rounds and the political uncertainty that has produced. We note the agreement lead and reached by Haitians on 5 February, which avoided a Government vacuum and established a road map for the continuation of the electoral process. We call for the prompt implementation of all the provisions of the agreement in the agreed period. We would also like to underline the responsibility of all Haitians in that regard. We call on all Haitians to contribute constructively, exercise maximum restraint and work together peacefully to strengthen confidence in the electoral process. We appreciate the efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in that regard and we encourage her to continue in that task.

The Group of Friends notes with alarm the politically motivated violence during January and February and calls on all political actors to promote a peaceful climate in full respect of the law. We reiterate the importance of the commitment of the Haitian Government to strengthen the rule of law and to make progress in the judicial and security sectors. In that regard, we welcome the continued strengthening, professionalization and reform of the Haitian National Police, and reiterate that police training should continue to be one of the key tasks of MINUSTAH. We also note the partial progress in implementing the five-year development plan for the period 2012-2016.

While recognizing progress in the judicial sector, it is urgently necessary to reduce prolonged pretrial detention and eliminate inhumane conditions of detention, ensure accountability and end impunity, including for past human rights violations.

The Group of Friends of Haiti reiterates its commitment to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. In that regard, we expect all United Nations personnel to adhere to the highest standards of conduct. The Group urges all stakeholders to assume their responsibilities to prevent such cases, investigate allegations and hold accountable those responsible.

We note the ongoing work of the Government of Haiti, MINUSTAH and others to protect members of vulnerable groups, but also note with concern the limited national capacity for the protection of human rights, particularly with regard to vulnerable groups. That demands the utmost attention of all actors to prevent and reduce violent crimes, particularly against women and children, including rape and other sexual violence. In that regard, the Group supports focusing on gender issues and child protection, as well as the continuing violence-reduction efforts to promote the welfare of youth at risk and vulnerable communities.

The Group also expresses its concern about the fact that the ongoing political instability diverts Haiti's attention from its persistent humanitarian challenges.

Similarly, the Group notes that food insecurity resulting from three years of drought, which continues to worsen, is now having an impact on 1.5 million Haitians, as well as on the country's stability.

The continued efforts to eliminate the cholera epidemic serve to remind us of the importance maintaining cooperation between the international community and the Government of Haiti to address the needs of the Haitian people. We echo the call of the Secretary-General to support the efforts of the Haitian authorities in this area, and encourage a greater number

of partners to complement the contributions of current international contributors.

The Group notes with concern that the current political crisis negatively affects development spending and, along with the drought and the concomitant decline in agricultural production and the decreasing flows of donor contributions, is also affecting the country's economic growth.

There can be no genuine stability or sustainable development in Haiti without strengthening democratic institutions and credible democratic processes. In that context, we emphasize the importance of completing the electoral cycle without further dela in order to ensure that Haiti can count on fully functioning democratic institutions. We recognize the principle of ownership and the primary responsibility of the Government and the people of Haiti over all aspects of stabilizing the country. We also underscore the responsibility that falls to MINUSTAH in that effort, according to its mandate.

The Group reaffirms its solidarity and commitment with the people and the Government of Haiti in their pursuit of stability, reconstruction, recovery, socioeconomic development and democratic consolidation.

Finally, the Group of Friends of Haiti recognizes the important role of MINUSTAH in ensuring stability and security in Haiti and expresses its support and appreciation for the women and men who make up MINUSTAH for their dedication and tireless efforts to support recovery and stability in Haiti.

I also wanted to make several comments in my national capacity, but given the lateness of the hour, I shall stop here.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vrailas (*spoke in French*): I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union and its ember States.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/225), and the Special Representative for her briefing. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Haiti for his statement.

The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Stabilization and Association Process country and potential candidate; as well as Armenia and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

Haiti is experiencing a sensitive political period. The European Union is concerned about the interruption in the electoral process following the disputed results of the elections held in August and October last year. Finalizing the elections is a necessary condition for political and institutional stability. It is urgent that Haiti complete the process in order to deal with the many economic, social and environmental challenges it faces. Haiti cannot afford a new major political and security crisis. It must safeguard the progress made following the devastating 2010 earthquake, even as new challenges emerge, especially related to drought and malnutrition.

The European Union calls on all Haitian actors, including interim President Privert, to make every effort to ensure the stability and security of the country, the success of the pending electoral process and the democratic consolidation of the country. The European Union remains a loyal partner of Haiti and continues to be committed to supporting the country in this critical phase, in coordination with other partners.

The European Union strongly supported the holding of elections in August and October 2015 along two tracks, namely, through a financial contribution of €5 million to the trust fund managed by the United Nations system and by sending an election observation mission, as requested by the Haitian authorities and agreed by them. The mission, in full independence and following a methodology and a code of conduct, observed all stages of the process in line with regional and internationl electoral obligations as well as Haitian law. The mission concluded that, despite some irregularities, mostly due to inadequate training of election officials, there was no significant disturbance of the result of the first round of presidential elections. The European Union regrets the interruption of the electoral process following the deterioration of the security environment and threats that weighed on the process. The results announced by the Provisional Electoral Council should be the baseline for the organization of the second round.

We should pay tribute to the Haitian people, who, in extremely difficult conditions, devoted themselves to ensuring the holding of elections, which is the only way to allow the Haitian people to choose their leaders.

The European Union takes note of the agreement of 5 February between the executive and the legislature branches aimed at ensuring institutional continuity, as a compromise whose implementation will avert a governance vacuum and ensure both the stability and continuity of the State and to allow for the continuation of the electoral process initiated in 2015, including the organization of the second round of presidential elections on 24 April. The European Union calls for the implementation of all the provisions of the agreement, in particular avoiding the transition to be extended illegitimately or that the electoral process is carried forward or suspended de facto in violation of the agreement. Everyone must show responsibility, restraint and a spirit of compromise in that regard.

The electoral process should continue in accordance with the principles of peace, inclusion, transparency and legality and on the basis of the agreement. It is essential to achieve the early functioning of an inclusive transitional Government that is confirmed by the Parliament and the Provisional Electoral Council in order to take the necessary measures to allow the electoral process initiated in 2015 to take place transparently and in compliance with the new agreed timetable. The European Union is ready to continue to support that process, including through its electoral observer mission.

The European Union has long been a supporter and a friend of Haiti. It remains one of its main donors of emergency assistance funds and development aid. That financial support, however, is subject to compliance with democratic principles, including the right of people to choose their Government democratically through the ballot box, and not through mobilization in the streets. Conditionality clauses are an integral part of the Cotonou Agreement, which links the European Union to the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions, including Haiti. Institutional stability is essential for European assistance to be effective and able lto produce lasting effects for the benefit of the population. It is therefore both urgent and necessary to put in place freely elected and legitimate institutions to address without delay the huge economic and structural challenges the country faces.

While the security situation remains generally stable, it has nevertheless been affected by the tensions in the electoral climate. The European Union welcomes the professionalism of the Haitian National Police, which managed the recent events successful and largely independently. The European Union stresses that the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) remains important in the current context. The European Union believes that the presence of MINUSTAH, and in particular its support for election security, while always respecting and protecting human rights and the principle of sovereignty, remains useful to ensure the continuation of the process, as well as peace and stability in the coming months. The European Union supports — when conditions permit — undertaking a review on the future of MINUSTAH, based on the Secretary-General's recommendations. The European Union encourages Haitian stakeholders to assume their responsibilities in concluding the pending electoral cycle.

In conclusion, the European Union remains committed to supporting the efforts of the Haitian authorities, the United Nations and the international community to ensure a better future for the entire Haitian people.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Sandoval Cojulún (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala welcomes the holding of this debate on the situation in Haiti. I take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (S/2016/225). I also thank Ms. Sandra Honoré for her briefing as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Guatemala aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

We take note of the efforts of MINUSTAH to carry out its mandate, including establishing a secure and stable environment, assist in monitoring and restructuring, support the political and constitutional process and contribute to the task of organizing and overseeing free and fair municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections. Guatemala is proudly contributing to supporting the stabilization of the country. At the same time, however, we stress the importance of public officials continuing to work to promote political and social stability, which Haitians very much deserve.

With regard to free and fair municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections, Guatemala notes that recent

events that led to the postponement of presidential election, which provoked an institutional crisis, do not help the country to regain the much-needed democratic path Haiti. We are concerned about such acts, which promote greater instability in the country.

We welcome the agreement reached among the parties that provides the necessary structures to preserve institutional continuity in Haiti and a road map for the swift conclusion of the ongoing electoral cycle. We emphasize the importance that the parties comply with the agreement of 5 February, which aims to protect Haiti's constitutional continuity, so that the final round of elections can take place on 24 April and a new presidential term can begin on 14 May.

We also support the view of the core group of the international community based in Port-au-Prince — made up of Brazil, Canada, France, Spain, the United States, European Union and the Organization of American States — with regard to the need to underscore the importance of completing the electoral process within the agreed time frame. In that regard, we welcome the election, on 14 February, of an interim President in order to safeguard institutional continuity and continue the electoral process in Haiti. At the same time, it is important that all the parties maintain a constructive dialogue to guide the country towards a stable and democratic future, which is essential to addressing the challenges facing Haiti and taking measures aimed at promoting calm and stability. It is important that the political sector continue contributing and carrying out its task in order to achieve the political stability that the country so badly needs, which will contribute to its development.

In another vein, we note with concern the dire humanitarian situation in the country, including the 24 per cent increase in the number of cholera cases from 2014 to 2015.

In conclusion, we welcome the fact that security on the ground in the framework of the electoral processes have been mainly handled by the Haitian National Police (HNP) and that only twice was MINUSTAH called on to assist — a clear example of the strengthening of the HNP.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Garcia Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sandra Honoré for presenting the report (S/2016/225) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We acknowledge her work and the results achieved, which are contributing to strengthening dialogue and Haiti's institutions. Let me also acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Haiti, Ambassador Denis Régis, and his active delegation. We also thank the new Force Commander, Lieutenant General Ajax Porto Pinheiro, and Commissioner Serge Therriault.

When the Security Council considered the situation in Haiti in October (see S/PV.7530), the electoral process was under way and the presidential elections were still on the horizon. Althogh the October elections took place in relative calm, allegations of irregularities and the tensions that were generated with regard to the process of reviewing the results forced successive postponements, until the indefinite suspension on 22 January. Despite those incidents, which hindered the transition process again, fortunately it was possible to achieve a parliamentary agreement that enabled the establishment of a provisional Government after the end of the mandate of President Martelly. Like other countries in the region worried about the future of Haiti, Argentina is closely following the process and hopes that the Haitian people can achieve the normalization of the political situation by concluding the electoral process and installing a legitimate Government that can consolidate greater stability.

With regard to the report of the Secretary-General, Argentina is concerned about the increasing violence in the course of the electoral process during the last months of 2015 and early this year. We remain confident that the work of the transitional Government can help both to reduce violence and to successfully conclude the electoral process.

Argentina deeply regrets that situation, although it cannot help but recall that, when the extension of the mandate of MINUSTAH was decided by resolution 2180 (2014), with the consequent downsizing, we, along with other countries of the region, supported the need to maintain an increased military presence until the electoral process could be considered successfully completed. Nevertheless, we should highlight the performance of MINUSTAH personnel, who continue to make great efforts, while prioritizing certain areas in order to fulfil thir mandate due to a reduction in staff.

With regard to policing, Argentina recognizes the work done on capacity-building for the Haitian National Police under the development plan for the period 2012-2016. We note, however, that, 10 months from the end of that span, the level of compliance is 60 per cent, as well as the need for greater commitment from the international community to strengthen both the police component and to promote the reform of the security sector. In that regard, Argentina looks forward to the next report of the Secretary-General in order to learn more precisely about the levels achieved. At the same time, we are confident that the report will make it possible to assess the situation with regard to the election process and the recommendations to be made by the Secretariat to the Council with regard to the future of MINUSTAH. In that connection, I would like to reiterate the need for the full participation of the Haitian Government in decisions about the United Nations presence in the country.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Argentina's support for the people and the Government to Haiti in their efforts to strengthen the democratic process, security and economic and social development of the country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the briefing of Special Representative of the Secretary General for Haiti Sandra Honoré.

Chile associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Peru, Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

As other delegations have noted, we too are concerned about the political situation in Haiti. It is essential to maintain and strengthen the space for dialogue that led to the agreement on 5 February, which all actors should undertake with responsibility. The provisions of the agreement must be implemented with the aim of concluding without delay the electoral process begun in 2015. Given the transitional nature of the current Government, we must bear in mind the need to return to the appropriate institutional channels. The political context must improve, given the repercussions in areas that affect the entire Haitian society, such as economic and social development, the security situation and the humanitarian spehere.

The security environment continued to be influenced by the electoral process. We are espccially concerend about the escalation in violence in the days leading up to the signing of the political agreement of 5 February. That made it necessary to deploy the full potential of the Haitian National Police and the important support of the United Nations Stabailization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We hope that the Haitian National Police witll meet its strategic development plan for the period 2012-2016.

The political crisis diverted the attention required by humanitarian crisis and had an impact on development spending, which is more complex in a context of declining international funding. We reiterate our particular concern about the situation of food insecurity. We hope that the efforts to eliminate cholera will continue and, in that regard, there is a need for a long-term perspective, especially in connection with providing clean water and sanitation.

With regard to the reconfiguration of MINUSTAH, we note the recommendation of the Secretary-General to carry out the strategic assessment called for in resolution 2243 (2015), once the electoral process is completed. We reiterate that, as a matter of principle, that process should properly take into the views of the troop-contributing countries. It is positive that the Mission and the country team advance in the consolidation of tasks that will be undertaken by the Haitian Government under the principle of national ownership.

Notwithstanding the current difficulties, we must not lose our perspective. Haiti has made tremendous progress in various areas and has overcome tragedies such as the 2010 earthquake, during which the Haitian people displayed commendable resilience. In that, the international community, particularly the United Nations, through its agencies, funds and programmes, and MINUSTAH, has played a fundamental role. The challenge now is to maintain the progress achieved.

In conclusion, we reiterate the commitment of the Government of Chile to the strengthening of the institutions and development of Haiti and its people, which has been reflected in our close bilateral cooperation and participation in MINUSTAH since its beginning, as well as in other forums for South-South, regional and international cooperation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Ruiz Blanco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on the situation in Haiti and also thank Special Representative Sandra Honoré for her proven commitment and leadership at the head of the Mission.

Colombia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Peru on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti.

Colombia underscores once again the invaluable work undertaken by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to ensure the sustainable well-being of the Haitian people. My country thanks the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/225) and wishes to highlight a few aspects of it.

Although the number of cases of, and deaths from, cholera in 2015 was a cause for concern, we are pleased to note that the last quarter of 2015 had the lowest number of cases since the epidemic began. We hope that trend can be maintained.

We are concerned about the repeated violations of children's rights mentioned in the report, especially the cases of child trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. We regret all the acts of sexual violence against women; however, we recognize the progress achieved by the community violence reduction programme, which has provided assistance to 1,919 vulnerable women. Particular consideration is given in the report to the more than twofold increase in the number of Haitians affected by food security issues as compared to the figures reported six months ago.

We reaffirm the need to create institutions both for the justice and prison systems in Haiti, since both scenarios present humanitarian challenges given the conditions in which people are detained in prisons in the country. We acknowledge MINUSTAH's support to local Governments in preparing newly elected mayors and municipal councils to take office appropriately. However, we note with concern the absence of women elected in the elections on 25 October, in disregard of the country's Constitution, as well as what was stated in resolution 1325 (2000) on the importance of increasing the representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national institutions.

My country has indicated that the central responsibility in the Haitian process corresponds to the Government and its leaders. That is why we appreciate the joint work carried out between MINUSTAH and the United Nations team in Haiti to define a transition plan for the country aimed at strengthening national ownership, in particular for its contribution to the progressive drawdown of the Mission's functions, which will then need to be assumed by the Government of Haiti.

We note with concern the repeated postponement of elections in Haiti. In that regard, we are confident that corrective measures are being taken to ensure the holding of the second round of presidential elections free of the violent incidents and irregularities that took place in previous rounds.

We welcome the agreement achieved to avoid a vacuum of governance in Haiti, and we reiterate that the next democratically elected President should assume as part of his policies a security and development approach, which will enable the country to overcome its current difficulties.

We highlight the observation made by the Secretary-General in his report with regard to the need for Haitian stakeholders to be able to overcome the current climate of political uncertainty. That will make it possible for the country to make important advances in terms of political stability and lay a foundation for a democratic culture.

Haiti must continue with its efforts to strengthen its institutions and the police force in the country. MINUSTAH must protect its achievements at all costs. We must have a coherent sustainable results-oriented framework and ensure a successful and peaceful transition to the next Government.

I want to conclude by reiterating the support of Colombia to the invaluable work carried out by MINUSTAH in ensuring the sustainable well-being of the Haitian people. My country remains committed to continuing to contribute to the strengthening and training of the Haitian National Police by supporting training and advisory activities for officers, as well as through the involvement of Colombian police in MINUSTAH. I am pleased to announce that, in the first week of April, a contingent of 24 Colombian police officers, including four women, will reach Port-au-Prince to join the Mission with the aim of strengthening the rule of law, good governance and the level of security and well-being in the country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM welcomes and appreciates the comprehensive briefing of Ambassador Sandra Honoré. We note with interest her comments on developments in Haiti, especially as they relate to the electoral process. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2016/225).

CARICOM is very concerned that the current political uncertainty in Haiti is such that the completion of the electoral process may not take place as outlined in the 5 February agreement. Recognizing that the people of Haiti must be in the forefront and at the centre of arriving at homegrown solutions, we urge the international community to provide support in identifying Haitian-owned consensual solutions to the stalled process. In our view, all that can be done must be done to ensure that the electoral process is completed in a timely fashion and in a manner that is transparent, free and fair, and free from fear. Elections are important for a democracy, and therefore a condition for the sustainable development of democratic States.

Haiti is already vulnerable to humanitarian crises compounded by drought, insufficient water, health and sanitation infrastructure and the presence of cholera, to name a few. Thereofre, the country cannot afford political instability. In that regard, CARICOM is pleased that, during recently concluded thirty-fourth session of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City, the CARICOM Ministers of Agriculture made a commitment to work together in addressing the issue of chronic hunger, poverty, food and nutrition security of the people of Haiti. In addition, CARICOM continues to express its gratitude to all States that have made financial contributions to the fund administered by the United Nations Development Programme to aid the electoral process in Haiti, including the contribution of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago of $1 million to the project.

MINUSTAH, under the leadership of Ambassador Honoré, must be commended for its continued stewardship in Haiti, where it has assisted the Haitian authorities not only with matters relating to the conduct of elections, but also the strengthening of the rule of law, the promotion of justice and the training of the Haitian National Police in order to ensure that it would be in a position to assume total control of policing activities in that State in the very near future.

As we continue to commend the Haitian authorities and MINUSTAH for their efforts at stabilizing Haiti during this transformative period, we are also mindful that the members of the Council need to act with prudence in doing all that it can to ensure that the electoral process is completed as stipulated in the agreement of 5 February. Any further erosion of that process will curtail progress and cause a reversal of the gains that Haiti has made thus far.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Honoré to respond to the comments and questions.

Ms. Honoré: I would like to thank you, Sir, the members of the Security Council, all Member States and multilateral and regional organizations and the Group of Friends for their observations and for their continued support for the democratization and stabilization process in Haiti. I also thank them for the guidance they have provided for the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). I have been particularly attentive to their expressions of concern about the interruption in the electoral process and to their recommendations on next steps. But even more, I have been attentive to their remarks to all the Haitian actors, on whose shoulders rests the primary responsibility to move forward resolutely to overcome the current impasse. On behalf of the men and women of MINUSTAH — military, police, civilian, international and national — as well as United Nations Volunteers, I thank them all for their appreciation of our service.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7652

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7652nd meeting
Friday, 18 March 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation of Burundi.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I warmly welcome the Secretary-General to the Security Council and I now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I am pleased to have this opportunity to brief the Security Council on my visit to Burundi late last month, which came on the heels of the Council's own travel to the country. After a devastating civil war that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, the signing of the Arusha Agreement in August 2000 put Burundi on the path towards peace and reconciliation. The effort that ended the civil war hinged on the willingness of former battlefield adversaries to sit at the same table and become partners in Burundi's common future. During my recent visit to the country, I urged all Burundian stakeholders to remember that lesson from their past and show genuine commitment to an inclusive political dialogue as the only means to peacefully resolve the crisis.

In order to promote confidence-building, the Government announced, prior to my visit, the annulment of the arrest warrants against 15 opposition figures. The Government also decided to reopen two media outlets that had previously been banned. Following my meeting with him in Bujumbura, President Nkurunziza agreed to release up to 2,000 detainees. We now look forward to the full implementation of those measures and expect further steps in the same direction, including the release of all political prisoners and an end to restrictions on civil society and media organizations. At my invitation, key political actors from the Government, the ruling party and opposition parties sat together with me to discuss the future of the country. Nothing prevents Burundian political actors from continuing on that essential course.

Burundi's political leaders must summon the necessary courage and confidence to launch a credible political process and build a future where the people of Burundi can once again live in peace and enjoy their fundamental rights. As I reiterated to President Nkurunziza, the international community stands ready to support Burundi in advancing a credible and inclusive dialogue process. The East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations must work together to provide the dedicated and professional mediation support that Burundi needs and deserves during this challenging time. The appointment of former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa as East African Community facilitator is an encouraging development.

During my visit, I underlined my deep concern about the volatile situation in the country. I expressed my profound worry at the potential for the violence spiralling outward, ending in civil war. I urged the Government to take measures to address the continued violence and the impunity that fuels it. The Government sought to assure me that the situation was gradually stabilizing. However, in my meetings with civil-society organizations and opposition parties, I was presented with a very different picture. I heard deeply disturbing allegations of continuing violence and human rights violations, including acts targeting women and children. Clearly, that is an unacceptable situation, one that requires the utmost attention to ensure that those responsible are held accountable for their acts. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will provide a more detailed briefing on the human rights situation.

I cannot stress enough the profound humanitarian consequences that political unrest, violence and impunity carry for the population. Recent humanitarian assessments suggest that harvests in crisis-affected areas have fallen short, and that nearly 700,000 people now suffer from severe food insecurity in Burundi. Since the beginning of the crisis, more than a quarter of a million people have fled Burundi and sought

refuge in neighbouring countries, which have shown commendable hospitality and solidarity. Despite the assurances provided by Burundian officials that refugees are eager to return and that some have already started doing so, the current number of refugees is indicative of the distress felt by Burundians over the continuation of violence and intimidation in their country. During my meeting, President Nkurunziza asked for United Nations assistance in securing the safe and unhindered return of the refugees.

Pursuant to resolution 2248 (2015), my Special Adviser, Mr. Jamal Benomar, has deployed a team to Burundi. I would like to thank the Burundian authorities for the cooperation and access extended to my Special Adviser and his team. I also welcome the letter of President Nkurunziza to the Security Council of 24 January, expressing the willingness of the Government to work closer with my Special Adviser and his team on issues of dialogue, security, disarmament, human rights and development. This is a complex set of issues and challenges, one on which we stand ready to fully support Burundi and for which we will require adequate capacities. The United Nations will continue to work with the Government to ensure that more concrete steps are taken to improve the human rights situation and that all stakeholders are willing to engage in a genuine and inclusive dialogue in good faith.

There is no alternative to a political settlement of the Burundian crisis. The international community must shift its approach from a focus on crisis response to a culture of early action and prevention. That can be achieved only if regional and international actors jointly focus their energy, attention and resources, and work together without delay to support a nationally owned inclusive political process in Burundi.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Al Hussein.

Mr. Al Hussein: I thank those present for this opportunity to discuss my continuing and grave concerns regarding the human rights situation in Burundi.

Despite some positive signals by the Government in recent weeks following visits by a delegation from the Council, by the Secretary-General and by five African Heads of State and Government, as well as two visits by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Ivan Šimonović, and the most recent visit of independent experts at the request of the Human Rights Council, those signals have yet to be followed up with strong and consequential action aimed at engaging real reconciliation.

After a court hearing of their case, 47 detainees who had been arrested almost a year ago were been provisionally freed this week. Those 47 were on the list of 125 detainees suggested by my Office for immediate release. We see that as an indication that some effort is being made to re-establish the rule of law. I strongly urge the release of all of the others on the list, especially political prisoners. As just mentioned by the Secretary-General, the Government has further pledged to release approximately 2,000 prisoners.

The Government has also taken steps to ensure that one fully independent radio station can operate. A second radio station, which has also reopened, is not independent from the Government. That gesture is encouraging, but falls well short of full freedom of expression and information. The Government cooperated with the team of independent experts mandated by the Human Rights Council during its first visit to Burundi earlier this month. The experts met with military, police and intelligence officials, in addition to victims and several representatives of civil society. The secretariat of the independent expert team is due to arrive in April for a four-month deployment, but the Government's approval is still pending. It is crucial that the investigative team be permitted to operate.

Despite indications of limited progress in some areas, serious human rights violations continue. My Office, which has presences in Bujumbura, Gitega, Makamba and Ngozi, has detected no indication of any decline in reports of arbitrary arrests and detention. Indeed, 140 such cases have been recorded this month so far, most of which were arbitrary. Moreover, although the numbers are clearly imprecise, we have seen increased reports of torture and ill-treatment since the beginning of January. During a recent visit by my staff to some detention centres in Bujumbura, it appeared that almost half of the detainees had been tortured or ill-treated — some of them seriously.

Despite the recent initial steps towards allowing the operation of a few independent media outlets, critical or independent voices remain severely restricted. Political opponents continue to be subjected to intimidation and arrest. Six days ago, 16 leading members of the

opposition party, the Forces nationales de libération, were arrested in Kirundo province by police assisted by Imbonerakure militia members associated with the ruling party. On 9 March, Hugo Haramategeko, one of the few national opposition figures remaining in the country, also was arrested. Civil society continues to operate within an extremely limited space, with activists suffering judicial harassment, arrests and torture, as well as violence and intimidation by agents of the State or militia associated with the Government. Since the violent events of December — involving an armed attack against three military camps around Bujumba, followed by reports of particularly brutal crackdowns by security forces in a number of neighbourhoods — two separate armed groups opposed to the Government have emerged. Two members of the ruling party, the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie, were killed by gunmen on Monday.

Grenade attacks are an almost daily occurrence, with grenades being thrown at police or military targets or indiscriminately tossed into crowds of people. Last month, Médecins sans Frontières treated more than 115 people who had been wounded by grenades over the course of just four days. I am very deeply concerned by the lack of progress in investigating the multiple serious human rights violations that have been reported over the past year. I take note of the recently released report of the commission of inquiry set up by the Ministry of Justice and led by the Prosecutor-General to investigate allegations of extrajudicial killings during the events of 11 December 2015. However, I urge further and much more credible investigations into the alleged multiple mass graves in the country, the torture, sexual violence and killings that were reported in December and many other serious allegations.

Continued human rights violations and impunity for perpetrators mean that many of Burundi's people live in terror. The country remains on the brink of a sudden escalation of violence of even more massive proportions. We have already seen hundreds of people killed, thousands detained and over a quarter of a million Burundians fleeing to neighbouring countries. The crisis has devastated Burundi's economy, compounding the human rights violations suffered by the people, and UNICEF reports that the number of children admitted for severe acute malnutrition in Bujumbura has doubled between October and December 2015. The crisis has also created a major humanitarian emergency and contributes to destabilizing the Great Lakes region, with major implications for regional peace and security.

I note that the European Union (EU), which is Burundi's largest aid donor, announced earlier this week that it would no longer issue funds through or to the Government. That action was taken in line with article 96 of the EU-African, Caribbean and Pacific trade agreement, which calls for the suspension of development cooperation when essential elements, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, are violated.

The Council has clearly recognized the urgency of the situation in Burundi. I encourage it to continue to work to persuade the Government to take significant steps towards real reconciliation and inclusive national dialogue. Half-measures will not heal the wounds that Burundi's people have suffered. There must be an end to disappearances, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings and torture, and there must be clear and public moves to hold perpetrators to account, including agents of the State and members of armed groups associated with the ruling party. Such steps are vital to restoring public confidence and to placing Burundi on the path towards development, security, and respect for human rights.

The President: I thank Mr. Al Hussein for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

Mr. Lauber: I am grateful to have this opportunity to brief the Security Council today on my recent visit to Burundi, Rwanda and Ethiopia and on the latest discussions within the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). I am also pleased that His Excellency Mr. Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Burundi's Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation, is participating in today's debate, and I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to him for the cooperation that the PBC enjoys with the Government of Burundi in its peacebuilding engagement. The following remarks were discussed and agreed on by the member countries of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, including the country concerned, Burundi.

From 15 to 20 February, I undertook my second regional visit as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. I held consultations in Bujumbura, Kigali and Addis Ababa. The main objective of my visit was to pursue the policy dialogue

with the Government of Burundi and other national and international stakeholders in order to complement ongoing peacebuilding efforts by the United Nations, the African Union and the East African Community (EAC). In Bujumbura I met with the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, and members of his Government, representatives of political parties, religious leaders, representatives of the opposition, the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, the National Commission for the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, civil-society organizations, international and regional financial institutions, human rights and military observers of the African Union (AU) and representatives of the international community and the United Nations family.

From Bujumbura I travelled to Kigali, where I focused on the humanitarian and regional dimension of the crisis in my discussions with the Minister for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs of Rwanda and with the country representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In Addis Ababa I held consultations with high-ranking officials of the African Union, including His Excellency Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, representatives of AU member States and partners and the United Nations Special Representative to the African Union. The special focus of my discussions in Addis Ababa was the AU engagement in Burundi and cooperation between the AU and the United Nations.

I have shared the detailed written report of my visit with members of the Security Council through the established channel. Today, I would like to share with it the main takeaway points of my visit and reflect on the PBC's continued engagement with Burundi, including recent contacts with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

After my departure, and prior to the visit of the Secretary-General and the high-level AU visit of five African Heads of States and Government, the Government of Burundi announced a series of decisions, which included the release of prisoners, the reopening of two radio stations and the revocation of the arrest warrants against approximately 15 members of the opposition, to which the Secretary-General referred earlier. The members of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission welcome those steps and encourage their rapid implementation, as well as additional steps to reinforce the momentum created by those measures and the recent high-level political engagement.

The urgent need for a viable, inclusive and intensified dialogue process was underlined by most interlocutors in Bujumbura, Kigali and Addis Ababa. Diverging views on the specifics of an inclusive dialogue persist, however. In Bujumbura, I had an opportunity to meet with the National Commission for the Inter-Burundian Dialogue. The Commission depicted the dialogue as a series of large gatherings in which participants elaborate their views on how to create democratic conditions for the Burundian elections in 2020. Preliminary findings by the National Commission seem to indicate that a key request of the population is to amend the Constitution and to revise the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burdundi, including with regard to ethnic quotas, term limits for the President and dual citizenship. Some national and many international observers I met with expressed concerns that tensions in Burundi could rise if the current process evolved into a campaign to revise the Arusha Agreement.

My discussions in Bujumbura also showed that there was a considerable risk that the economic downturn could become an additional driver of the crisis. After 10 years of steady economic growth, the country experienced negative growth of 4 per cent in 2015. The Government of Burundi expressed its regret about the fact that some partners had reduced their cooperation with Burundi. The suspension of direct budgetary support will have an immediate impact on public expenditures, which will decrease by 22 per cent in 2016. I was told by development partners that the political crisis had slowed the implementation of strategic programmes, such as those on infrastructure, roads and electricity. Furthermore, I was informed that the cycle of cooperation strategies and key assistance mechanisms used by the main financial and development partners of Burundi would end in 2016. Negotiations on a new cycle might take place in a context of uncertainty, if the current political crisis continues. Consequently, envelopes allocated to Burundi might be affected, or the disbursement of funds further delayed. On the other hand, international donors appeared to be ready to re-engage if they saw clear sigs towards the resolution of the current crisis and a more conducive environment being established. In parallel to a political dialogue process, the Government of Burundi and international donors might therefore want to intensify

their conversation on the socioeconomic impact of the crisis.

I share the assessment of previous briefers that the ongoing political crisis and insecurity persists, while the patterns of violent acts committed by elements of the security forces and armed opposition seem to change. The use of grenades in public places appears to be a new trend. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the human rights observers of the African Union, whom I met with in Bujumbura, confirmed that current incidents might be less visible than those that took place after the events of 11 December, but they reported allegations of forced disappearances, killings, torture, ill-treatment, hate speech and sexual violence.

On 9 March, I briefed members of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on my mission. In a subsequent discussion, the PBC members reiterated their rejection of violence committed by either side. Many members expressed grave concern about the ongoing violence and human rights violations. Members welcomed the work being done by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Mr. Benomar, and the deployment of his team in Burundi. They also expressed support for the Special Adviser, particularly for his efforts aimed at ensuring coherence between the different actors. The members of the configuration further welcomed the recent appointment of the former President of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, to facilitate the dialogue process under the East African Community mediator, President Museveni of Uganda. EAC members considered the AU decision to deploy an additional 100 human rights monitors and 100 military experts a positive step towards achieving general stabilization and an improvement in the human rights situation. The Peacebuilding Fund is planning to support the 32 AU human rights observers, who are already in the country and are cooperating closely with OHCHR. Other partners are encouraged to consider contributions to the deployment of additional observers.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the joint steering committee that oversees PBF activities in Burundi decided, on 9 March, to launch new initiatives in various areas of dialogue, including support for women's roles in the dialogue process, the promotion and protection of human rights, and support for victims, youth engagement, community security and social cohesion.

From my discussions in the region and within the Burundi configuration of the PBC, I have drawn the following conclusions.

First, the resolution of the current crisis in Burundi will require maximum coherence among international and regional organizations, in particular among the United Nations, the AU and the EAC. Coordinated efforts will be crucial for establishing a viable, inclusive and intensified political dialogue. Such a process can only benefit from the accumulated experience of those three organizations, if the three join their efforts. In that regard, the Security Council's overall guidance and support will be critical.

Secondly, the increased international presence in Burundi can considerably help to improve the security and human rights situation and to reduce violence. It therefore remains crucial that the Security Council continue its discussion in consultation with the Government of Burundi on the options for United Nations engagement. I am glad that the African Union and the Government of Burundi have agreed to increase the number of human rights and military observers. I also welcome the recent visit to Burundi by three independent experts mandated by the Human Rights Council, which will be followed by additional visits between now and July. That sort of impartial monitoring and engagement can also help to clarify allegations and ease tensions within Burundian society.

Thirdly, there is a need to draw attention to the possible regional implications of the crisis.

Fourthly, the socioeconomic dimension of the current crisis must not be overlooked. In line with the holistic approach to peacebuilding, the Burundi configuration can continue to serve as a platform for including the socioeconomic dimensions in the international debate on Burundi. For my part, I will continue the configuration's engagement with the main development partners of Burundi. A systematic dialogue between the Government of Burundi and international donors would help to clarify mutual expectations. In that regard, the next cycle of the Burundi poverty-reduction strategy paper provides a crucial opportunity to redefine the Government's vision and to reset cooperation with international partners.

The President: I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Manongi (United Republid of Tanzania): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open briefing on the situation in Burundi.

The President of Tanzania, His Excellency Mr. John Pombe Magufuli, is acutely aware that the state of affairs in Burundi is of great concern to the subregion, and indeed to the international community. That is not only because Burundi is a State member of the community, but also because, as a region, we all stand to suffer adverse consequences resulting from the insecurity and instability in Burundi. We therefore commend the Secretary-General's efforts to promote cooperation with Burundi and the region. We also ask that those welcome efforts be balanced by equal measures to enhance support for the socioeconomic needs of the people of Burundi, as well as to assist the country in its efforts to strengthen its institutions of governance. Obviously, there are a number of push factors driving the current state of play that need to be approached and resolved in an open, inclusive and comprehensive manner. We thank those who have supported our efforts. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that more support is required in order to sustain a credible and inclusive dialogue in Burundi.

The East African Community will continue to exert all efforts in support of peace and security in Burundi. The region is conscious that, if left unchecked, the political situation there has the potential to degenerate further, with far-reaching humanitarian implications. The East African Community is ready to play its part. We welcome the engagement of the United Nations and look forward to its playing a complementary and mutually supportive role. We are encouraged by, and indeed grateful for, the confidence that has been expressed in connection with the appointment of Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as a facilitator in support of the mediator for the Burundi peace process, Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. In his efforts to assist Burundi and its people during the Arusha peace process in 2000, President Mkapa had this to say:

> "A sustainable solution to the Burundi conflict has to come out of negotiations in which all who have a stake in Burundi can freely participate. A sustainable solution has to be owned and respected by all participants in the peace process. The outside world cannot impose a durable solution."

We believe that that admonition remains true for the circumstances that we are dealing with today in Burundi. It is therefore encouraging that President Mkapa is currently making a preliminary visit to the region in order to ensure that there is a shared understanding of his new mandate. He has assured community leaders of his mission's dedication, openness and inclusiveness. He needs, and deserves, the genuine support and cooperation of all parties in Burundi, the region and the international community. We expect all stakeholders to be forthcoming and to commit to a speedy, genuine and successful outcome. The subregion will not hesitate to seek and call for the imposition of stern measures on any individuals or groups that attempt to act as spoilers of the undertaking. In the meantime, we call for unity of purpose and action as we promote the process for a journey of great hope and expectations embodied in the legitimate aspirations of the people of Burundi, the East African Community, the African Union and, indeed, the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation of Burundi.

Mr. Nyamitwe (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Angola on your leadership of the Security Council for the month of March, and to thank you for organizing today's briefing on the situation in Burundi. I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his presence today and would like to thank him, personally and on behalf of President Nkurunziza and the people of Burundi, for his recent visit to our country. I must also not fail to thank the Security Council for its visit to Burundi in January. I am also grateful to the other speakers for the quality of their contributions to today's meeting, even while I am sure they will understand if I cannot fully agree with the statement by Mr. Al Hussein. One sometimes wonders whether he understands the situation in our country, since his statement has so many gaps, so many troubling facts and, frankly speaking, so many contradictions. In my statement, I would like to emphasize some essential aspects of the political, security and human rights situations in Burundi.

With regard to the political dialogue, we are aware that the current political problems facing Burundians can be solved only through an inclusive, open and sincere dialogue among Burundians themselves, both inside and outside the country, conducted correctly

and holistically. The Head of State has already committed to undertaking that dialogue, and he already communicated his willingness in that regard to the Secretary-General during his visit on 3 February, and to the high-level delegation of the African Union, led by President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, which visited Bujumbura in the wake of the unfortunate hearing of 25 February.

We are in complete agreement that it is clear that a political solution must be preferred to a military one. It is true that there are still parties in Burundi who believe in a military solution, but we believe that they are mistaken. One of the recommendations made at the meeting of the Ministers of Defence of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 10 February in Luanda called on all stakeholders to engage in the inter-Burundian dialogue, which is the best way to build peace and unity for the Burundian people. Yes, the dialogue we want should be inclusive, but we should nonetheless be able to express our oft-repeated position that those who joined in the attempt to overthrow our legitimate institutions on 13 May 2015 can obviously not be granted an opportunity to achieve through dialogue what they failed to achieve through a coup d'état.

It is therefore understandable that the dialogue cannot be used as a way to disguise or reinforce a culture of impunity in Burundi or to trample on universally recognized principles of democracy. Rather, dialogue should be a way to consolidate peace and social justice. We have therefore committed in good faith to such a political dialogue, whose internal momentum is well under way under the leadership of the National Commission on the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, which is working hard throughout the country to ensure that no one is left out. In any case, all Burundian citizens are invited to contribute to our national reconstruction.

With regard to national reconciliation, the President of the Republic announced a week ago the official start of the operational phase of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the presence of several of our international, technical and financial partners. As the Council is aware, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is chaired by a cleric, consists of 11 members, of whom six are Hutu, four Tutsi and one Twa, which corresponds to the quotas recognized by the Arusha accord and confirmed by the 2005 Constitution. The Commission therefore symbolizes political, ethnic, regional and gender inclusiveness. It is tasked with preparing a programme for pardons, reconciliation and reparation to be submitted to the Government and Parliament of Burundi. Burundi must take advantage of such an opportunity to work calmly to build their country's future in order to ensure that the events of the past can never be repeated. We are talking about a huge work in progress — as the Arusha accord foresaw — to which Burundi's Head of State attaches enormous importance, and we will of course be very happy if the international community would lend us its assistance.

On the regional front, consultations are ongoing with subregional facilitation in order to arrive at agreement on important points for the next dialogue session with those members of the diaspora who desire peace, with full inclusivity, as was outlined in resolution 2248 (2015), adopted by the Security Council on 12 November of last year. Among other things, those points concern the effective identification of participants as well as the items on the agenda, in accordance with the proposed methodology, with which Burundi is in full agreement. We are grateful to the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, the new facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, who is, as the representative of Tanzania just mentioned, fully involved in consultations in the region. The day before yesterday he was received by President Museveni of Uganda, yesterday he was received in President Kagame of Rwanda and today he was received by President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi. As I speak, I think he is on his return journey.

With regard to security, I can confirm that overall it is good. It is true that there are still some challenges here and there, but overall the situation is good at the national level and citizens see peaceful activities. However, there are still some elements of the opposition who are throwing grenades at peaceful citizens; I think others have referred to that. Contrary to the information provided by the opposition to the foreign press and associated or supportive media, Burundi is not guilty of those crimes. If you come to Burundi you will see that the image that is being put out by the media is not true at all. The good news is that the few cases of criminality and local terrorism aimed at drawing the attention of the international community are being brought under control.

Several young people who were manipulated and recruited into criminal groups gave themselves up to the security services with weapons, ammunition and other

military paraphernalia, and this movement to renounce violence continues. The criminal elements who turned themselves in were turned over to the National Human Rights Commission for their reintegration into their communities of origin. They are cooperating and have indicated certain locations where these opposition groups have killed and buried citizens in common graves. Today another common grave was found in a zone that was under the control of the opposition for a long time.

For us and for the Council it is clear that throwing grenades into crowds is terrorism, which must be treated and condemned as such. No ideology, no political fight can justify such senseless acts that take the lives of children and women, who have nothing to do with the political situation in the country. We ask the Security Council to condemn the opposition's violence and terrorism, which contravenes the provisions of resolution 2248 (2015).

In order to restore sustainable peace to our country, we have placed the civilian population at the heart of the Government's concerns. The process is under way and the results have been satisfactory. Because of the cooperation among the population, the police, the justice sector and the administration, many weapons have been seized from citizens.

In order to continue with the disarmament process in transparency and cooperation, as the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission said earlier, there is a need for an international presence. That is the reality with the presence of African Union human rights and military observers, whose numbers have now been increased to 100 in each of the two categories. Although we will soon sign the memorandum of understanding, that has already been agreed; of course, we now have to wait for the personnel to be identified and sent to the country.

My country Burundi cannot remain silent. We will never be able to remain silent while we are subject to aggression. This clearly represents an existential threat. This has to do with acts of aggression coming from Rwanda, a neighbouring country with which Burundi has much in common in terms of culture. Our languages are not that dissimilar. Several credible reports have already confirmed that Rwanda is facilitating the recuitment, the training and the arming of Burundian refugees in order to destabilize Burundi. I cannot give the Council the full list, but if one wants to know more you can read the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the reports of Refugees International and Human Rights Watch. There is irrefutable proof available to us going back to the beginning of the insurrection in 2015, as well as the testimonials of children who were recuited and trained by Rwanda into the movement. They refer to specific military sites.

We have also provided similar information to institutions. The Head of State in Burundi took the opportunity to mention that clearly to the Secretary-General when he visited Burundi. It is something we take very seriously. We cannot remain silent in that regard. Let no one be under any illusions about that. As long as the situation persists, we must talk about it so that these activities stop. It is difficult today to know who is behind these acts — with so much information, proof and details available to Burundi as well as to the international community. On several occasions, Burundi has asked for an expanded joint verification mission from the Conference on the Great Lakes Region be sent to Burundi to clarify matters and determine whether those allegations are well-founded or not. That has not been the case; nevertheless, that has not discouraged us in the least.

Through our Permanent Mission in New York, Burundi has officially asked the President of the Security Council to address the issue urgently, as it seriously threatens international peace and security — not just in Burundi and Rwanda, but also the whole region. The time to act is now, as tomorrow will be too late. Today our Government once again launches an appeal to the Security Council to remind Rwanda that it has international obligations in terms of refugees as well as in terms of good neighbourliness. There are resolutions and instruments to which it freely adhered that call for respect for the peaceful coexistance of States in accordance with international law. Its recruitment activities must stop; the training and arming of negative forces that are attacking Burundi must also stop. We hope that that Council will accede to our request.

With regard to human rights, my delegation recalls that Burundi attaches great importance to human rights. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy in this area. We acknowledger that there are still cases of human rights violations, as there are elsewhere. We have established a judicial investigation commission to shed light into certain allegations of human rights violations from the beginning of the insurrection up

until today. The human rights path in Burundi is not a rocky one; there are challenges, yes, but we have faith that we can overcome them. The willingness is there. It is palpable. The support of partners is needed to move forward together on the path towards democracy.

We also recall that our Government has placed the fight against impunity at the heart of its priorities. That is done without concern for political affiliations. We cooperate closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. He knows that well, as does his office in Burundi. We have given them free access to our services regarding transparency issues. The same goes for the human rights observers of the African Union, the number of which, as I just mentioned, has just been increased. Of course, we regret the fact that certain reports do not necessarily reflect the situation on the ground. We can say that this is more or less to be expected, within certain limitations.

We have been just as cooperative with the human rights experts of the United Nations who have just spent time in our country. At the end of their mission a few days ago, the experts held a press conference during which they declared:

> "We have observed a relative calm in Burundi. We should point out that we have not noted a disturbance. We have noticed a glimmer of hope, a clear and shared will to engage and to move forward to improve peace and security in Burundi. Within the framework of our mission, we cannot say that the situation in Burundi is an explosive one — absolutely not."

With regard to the freedom of expression and of civil society, I wish to inform all present that Burundi has a good tradition of freedom of expression and very active civil society that we wish to maintain. In that regard, we have just authorized the re-opening of two private radio stations that had been destroyed in the wake of the attempted coup of 13 May 2015. I am speaking of Radio Isanganiro and Rema Television and Radio, which have already begun to broadcast. In addition to those two radio stations, which have resumed their activities, the National Communications Directorate has also just authorized a private radio station, Izere FM.

With regard to socioeconomic development, my delegation has the impression that the political concerns of our partners have eclipsed the economic and social needs of our population. Clearly, placing political aspects before socioeconomic concerns is a factor that could lead to increased stability in our country. The two dimensions should receive equal attention from our partners, whom we ask to resume cooperation with our Government, which seeks to do the proper thing. We ask our partners to seriously consider the appeal made the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, on behalf of the African Union high-level delegation to Burundi, with regard to the importance of resuming cooperation as a factor for strengthening peace.

With regard to cooperation with the European Union, my Government takes note of its recent declaration relating to the suspencion of direct aid of the European Union to Burundi. Contrary to what Mr. Zeid said just now, we do not have the impression that this decision is in accordance with article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. There are clearly two parties to any agreement. No party cannot take advantage of its greater strength, be it numeric or qualitative, to impose on the other party its vision of the situation or, quite frankly, its political preference. This is indeed a clear violation of the Cotonou Agreement, which the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries will at some point have to review to ensure improved fairness, even if there is no real equality, between the ACP countries and the European Union. As I said, the Agreement is not a one-way street.

The Burundian Government regrets the fact that European Union has not taken into account positive developments in the ongoing inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue or recently adopted human rights measures, including the pardoning of more than 2,000 prisoners and the cancellation of arrest warrants against certain politicians, the liberation of a number of people who had been detained with respect to the insurrection, and the the re-opening of a number of private radio stations. Despite this hasty and unfair decision, my Government will continue wholeheartedly to redress the political and security situations in the interests of the well-being of the Burundian people, while bearing in mind our sovereignty, territorial integrity and good relations with our partners.

Regarding cooperation with the United Nations, Burundi offers — I repeat, offers — its full cooperation with the country team, the team of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, as well as the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. Burundi remains available to the Secretary-General to discuss and agree on the size

and mission of the Special Adviser's team provided for under resolution 2248 (2016).

My delegation recalls that African Heads of State, members of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC), the high-level delegation of the African Union led by South African President Jacob Zuma and the Burundian people, through their Parliament, rejected the option of an armed international presence in Burundi, favouring the option of the inter-Burundian political dialogue and observation missions. We clearly reiterate our unequivocal position. The Head of State reiterated this position to the Secretary-General during their talks of 23 February in Bujumbura.

I would like to conclude my remarks with two or three words. When the Council receives reports on Burundi in New York, it gets the impression that the country is on the precipice, as has often repeated Mr. Zeid. This perception of the country has led some institutions to make decisions that, in our opinion, were unfortunate — such the as AUPSC decision to deploy 5,000 men. This decision was not based on realities on the ground.

We do not at all feel that we have closed the door to initiatives that would be willing to take the reality on the ground into account. Whenever the Peacebuilding Commission has sought to visit and see Burundi, it has been able to do so without problem. The Security Council has come and it has seen that Burundi was not on the brink of genocide. I very sincerely and solemnly urge those who would understand the reality on the ground to come themselves to see it rather than rely on reports that are sometimes not necessarily a reflection of reality on the ground and seek or serve other interests that are certainly contrary to the interests of the Burundian people and the region in general.

My country, Burundi, my people, the people of Burundi — Hutus, Tutsis and Twas together — aspire to peace. Burundi absolutely aspires to peace. The Burundian people have suffered in the past and certainly would not wish to find themselves today or in the coming years in the same conditions in which they found themselves in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1993 and beyond. That is why we invite not only members of the Security Council, but also all the countries of the region to work for the country to remain stable, so that the institutions are stable and not disrupted, and to help the Burundian people to realize their aspirations to participate legitimately, like all other peoples of the world, in all that globalization can offer today in material terms, and to cushion the shocks that this same globalization can bring to the peoples of the South.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.